

Thursday July 23 1998

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Czech Republic 15 50	Lithuania 1 500	Switzerland 1 500
Denmark 15 50	Malta 1 500	Turkey 1 500
Egypt 15 50	Netherlands 1 500	USA 1 500
Finland 15 50	Norway 1 500	
France 15 50		
Germany 15 50		

The Guardian

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Listening is for losers

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Will Anna get Rupert's billions?

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Wall Street's dash for cash

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Pink protest



Flags of gay rights activists who held a vigil outside Parliament during yesterday's Lords debate on the age of consent for homosexuals

PHOTOGRAPH: KERNAN DOHERTY

Crisis over gay vote

Peers defy MPs on age of consent

Lucy Ward Political correspondent

A REDUCTION in the gay age of consent was blocked in the House of Lords last night as peers provoked a constitutional storm by voting to overturn the huge Commons majority.

After a passionate debate the amendment to equalise the gay and heterosexual age of consent at 15 was defeated by 168 votes—390 to 122.

A packed chamber heard vehement opposition to the government proposal, risking a constitutional confrontation

duty — for a vigil during the debate. Some chained themselves to railings, and were freed by police with boltcutters. The protesters called on peers to support the will of the Commons, which last month agreed to equalise the age of consent by a majority of 207 on a free vote.

Ministers are anxious to avoid a new "ping-pong" battle between the Lords and Commons over the flagship Crime and Disorder Bill, which contains measures to fulfil Labour's manifesto pledge to speed up the youth justice system.

It emerged on Tuesday that Mr Straw was prepared to drop the age of consent amendment, tabled by the Labour backbencher Ann Keen, rather than see the bill fail because the Lord and Commons could not agree it before the summer recess.

Home Office minister Alan Michael yesterday said the Government would have to consider the Lords' decision.



He warned that "to delay the Crime and Disorder Bill would create enormous problems and it would delay things like the Sexual Offences Order which is meant to protect children, as well as many aspects which are meant to nip offending in the bud with young offenders."

The call to overturn the age of consent amendment was led by the Tory peer, Baroness Young. She said churches, Muslim groups and members of the public who had "deluged" her with letters backed her call. She told peers that two little parliamentary time had been given to discussion of the reform, which was introduced only on the third reading of the bill after a three-hour Commons debate.

"There has been no opportunity at all for detailed consideration of this change in the law and all the issues," said Lady Young. The reform could prove merely the "thin end of the wedge" leading to a further lowering of the age of consent to 14 and possibly to gay marriage.

Peers speaking in favour of lowering the age of consent were in a clear minority. Labour's Baroness Mollison, QC, said the change would protect young men because they would no longer be

driven into secrecy and isolation.

A further key concern was the need to protect vulnerable young people if the age of consent was reduced. The Government is committed to protecting teenagers from abuse by predatory adults in positions of authority, and has set up a working party due to report by the end of the year.

Lady Young argued the Government had accepted the change while acknowledging the need to protect vulnerable young people at risk — that the move was "seriously flawed". "I ask myself as a simple person how can they let it go forward on to the statute book in this unsatisfactory state?"

The Government should take back the amendment, and bring forward its own bill reducing the age of consent in the next parliamentary session, she said.

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PCC clears newspapers that paid criminals

Roy Greenslade

IN A landmark decision, the Press Complaints Commission yesterday rejected complaints against four newspapers for paying convicted criminals to write articles. The PCC argued that there was sufficient public interest to warrant publication.

It upheld the right of the Times to serialise the controversial book by Gitta Sereny about Mary Bell, the Daily Telegraph for serialising a book by IRA informer Sean O'Callaghan, and the Mirror and the Express for their exclusive interviews with nurses Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan.

Its detailed eight-page adjudication on the three cases was based on a strict interpretation of the editors' code of conduct which outlaws payments to convicted criminals unless justified in the public interest.

"It is wrong to glorify crime," noted the PCC, but "not necessarily in writing about it. There will be occasions on which the public has a right to know about events relating to a crime or criminals. The key to the code is, therefore, public interest."

This argument was reinforced by Lord Wakeham, the PCC's chairman, who said yesterday: "All along we saw that our task lay in making an objective judgment based on the wording of the code rather than making a moral judgment."

In a separate adjudication, the Home Office last night censured its civil servants for failing to tell ministers about the impending publication of the Bell book.

Bell, jailed in 1968 for killing two little boys, was the highest-profile case before the PCC. When the Times paid to serialise Cries Unheard by Gitta Sereny in April, there was a public outcry. The

boys' relatives held public protests.

More than 100 complaints were sent to the PCC but it agreed with the Times that it was of overriding public importance to be able to read about Bell's early life and the possible reasons for her having committed her crimes.

Bell, who had been living under an assumed name for years in a secret location, was swiftly hunted down by reporters. She had to be taken into protective custody by police and was forced to reveal to her own 14-year-old daughter her awful secrets.

No complaint was made against the press's behaviour, but the PCC devotes several paragraphs to condemning papers for harassment of Bell.

In the cases of the nurses Parry and McLauchlan, who were jailed for the murder of colleague Yvonne Gilford in Saudi Arabia, the PCC decided there was sufficient evidence of a miscarriage of justice to warrant papers paying for their stories.

It similarly felt that the Telegraph was right to publish the memoirs of former IRA informer, Sean O'Callaghan, in spite of two convictions for murder, because he was shedding light on the workings of a secret terrorist organisation responsible for killing hundreds of people.

In its conclusion, the PCC said that in no case had there been a breach of the editors' code. "These were all matters on which the public had a right to know and about which wide debate was legitimate. Furthermore, payment [was] in all probability 'necessary' to secure the material."

It understands that some people may find all such payments "extremely offensive" but this moral argument "goes beyond the scope of the turn to page 2, column 1

Sales halved as ardour cools in Viagra love affair

Patients over-estimated sexual appetite, say US doctors

Joanna Cole in New York

AMERICA'S new gold rush is over. Prescription drugs for male impotence drug Viagra have fallen by almost half since a peak in May of 200,424 a week, with doctors saying many patients do not actually want as much sex as they had imagined.

"The euphoria is probably gone," said Steve List, an analyst with Mehta Partners, a New York investment firm.

"Many people are having less sex than they had anticipated," agreed Dr J. Francois Eid, the director of the New York Presbyterian Impotency Centre.

The drop is due in part to the refusal of some medical insurance companies to pay for the drug, but doctors also believe that patients are rationing the little blue pills,

which cost \$10 (£5) each, and are treating themselves to sex less often than expected.

Some psychologists have suggested that the reintroduction of sex into a relationship where the partners have grown accustomed to celibacy may be disruptive.

According to Dr Eid, there is evidence to suggest that some people are using the drug incorrectly and then giving up on it in the belief that it is not working for them. For Viagra to be effective it should be taken an hour before sex. It will not work if there is no sexual stimulus.

"It can take half a dozen tries before everything goes perfectly," said Dr Eid. "Some will give up after one or two attempts."

On its launch in April, Viagra broke all records for a new drug as nearly 200,000 prescriptions were written in the first week. Urologists reported record attendances at clinics and many, overwhelmed by demand, had to have special Viagra stamps made to hasten the prescription process.

Although sales last week dropped to 104,313, they remain exceptional for a new drug and

are expected to top \$1 billion by the end of the year.

Viagra has suffered adverse publicity with the death of several patients. The US Food and Drug Administration confirmed last night that 38 Viagra users had died and said it was investigating another 38 fatalities. Manufacturer Pfizer pointed out that many of those patients were elderly and already unwell.

Alternative impotence treatments which are more frequently covered by insurance policies have recovered some of their market share.

"This is something we no-

serve with every product used to treat erectile dysfunction," said Dr Eid. "There's always an initial, pent-up need for a new product, and everybody wants to try it."

Myron Holubick, the general manager of the Plymouth Group, the consulting arm of IMS Health, agreed. He said the best indicator of Viagra's future potential was the refill rate, which had climbed steadily before a slight drop in the latest figures.

"As long as people keep refilling their prescriptions, Viagra probably will reach \$1 billion," he said.

Inside	Britain British secret agents drew up plans to assassinate Hitler by poisoning his tea, according to documents released today.	World News As temperatures in Dallas remained above 100°F for a 15th day, the death toll in the United States heatwave rose to 177.	Analysis Rugby union's transition to professionalism was mishandled — and the game is in crisis, with top clubs going to the wall.	Finance Struggling bank group Hoyer is to announce 1,500 redundancies and introduce a four-day week at the British plants.	Obituaries 10 Comment 8 Crossword 16 G2 Quick Crossword 15 Weather, TV and Radio 16
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sheaf of papers towards him. Mr Blair, having once again confused denial with refutation, ploughed on. "We believe our forecasts are right. "We believe they are prudent!" Now who told him to use that word?

Crowning glory for Windrush

Windrush Gala Concert
Alexandra Palace

Even some facile links couldn't take the shine off what, despite persistent technical hitches and the hasty turnover of acts, was a superior evening's entertainment.

The event's most rapturously received turn was the dance party Benjamin Ephraïm, who performed a pastiche of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech.

Printed in the programme is the quote that the Windsorish immigrants would "not last one winter." That they lasted that winter and many more since is something worth celebrating, this extravaganza celebrated — if sometimes chaotically — confirmed.

Blair attacks director greed

America mourns space pioneer and icon

Ed Vulliamy in Washington

losing the space race when Freedom 7 launched on May 5 1961. The mission was a retort to Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, who had beaten Shepard into space by 23 days.

Alan Shepard walks on the moon during the Apollo 14 mission in 1971

Looking frail but dignified, he spoke with restrained eloquence about his thoughts as he looked down upon the planet. "I saw the earth, in a great black space — all those people desperately trying to get on together. I thought it's a pity they can't all come up to the

moon and look down and think, 'Hey, let's take care of this place after all'."

Retiring from the space agency and from the navy as a rear admiral in 1974, he became a millionaire by following his father into banking.

He also dabbled on the pe-

But his last home was a place of almost complete seclusion, a guarded retreat he designed for himself in Florida.

well. But asked whether he would follow John Glenn's example and return to space he replied: "If I was in perfect physical condition, I'd probably say I'd go again. But I think I'll say I'm finished."

Woodhead damns research as irrelevant

**John Carvel
and Vivek Chaudhary**

CHRIS Woodhead, the chief inspector of schools, yesterday went for the throat of the liberal education establishment when he published a scathing report dismissing the bulk of academic research on teaching and learning as second rate, logically incoherent and politically biased.

He stepped up his campaign against the profession's "trendy" intellectuals by claiming their work was an expensive irrelevance, long on theory and short on practical support to help teachers improve standards.

Mr Woodhead has made no secret of his contempt for education professors and wants to shift a larger proportion of teacher training out of their university lecture theatres and into schools.

Yesterday he went a stage further by attacking the research that has underpinned teacher training and the development of education policy for a generation.

Considerable sums of public money are being pumped into education research of little value," he said.

Mr Woodhead had commissioned an investigation into educational research by James Tooley, a Newcastle University professor with free-market education theo-

ries. His report, published yesterday, said research into areas such as race and gender costs more than \$50 million of taxpayers' money each year. The money could be better used to pay for 2,500 more teachers or equip 70 secondary schools with a computer for every child.

Educational academics hit back at Mr Woodhead and Mr Tooley, accusing them of being more partisan than the researchers they were criticising. Margaret Brown, a professor at Kings College, London, and president of the British Educational Research Association, said: "There is clearly a political agenda behind this report and Mr Woodhead and Mr Tooley

have got together to stitch it up.

"We are not pretending that all articles published are wonderful and there is no room for improvement. But this report is also about Mr Woodhead settling old scores."

But Mr Woodhead got a strong signal of support from the Department for Education and Employment. Kim Howells, minister for Lifelong Learning, said: "Professor Tooley's report raises grave concerns about the quality of education in this country."

In a foreword to the report, Mr Woodhead said: "Educational research is not making the contribution it should. Much that is published is, on this analysis, at best no more

than an irrelevance and a distraction."

Mr Tooley, director of the training and education unit of the Institute of Economic Affairs, based his report on an analysis of four British educational research journals from 1994 and 1996.

He examined a sample of 41 articles and concluded that only 15 demonstrated good academic practice. The report criticised the presentation of research, the quality of arguments and the methodology of quantitative research.

Mr Tooley said his findings were paid £12,000 of taxpayers' money to produce the report over six months. Mr Woodhead said it was "cheap at the price."

The Hague talks, involving diplomats and legal experts, began some weeks ago, although Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, first raised the issue of changing his position on the trial venue with his US counterpart, Madeleine Albright, last December.

They agreed then on the need to regain the initiative because opposition to UN sanctions on Libya — imposed after Tripoli failed to surrender the two — has grown in Arab and African countries.

Hassouma al-Shawish, director general for political affairs of the Libyan Foreign Ministry, said: "Delivering the message has never been a problem, as long as the court is in a neutral country."

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 KENNETH BRANAGH EMBETH DAVIDTZ ROBERT DOWNEY JR. DARYL HANNAH TOM BERINGER AND ROBERT DUVAL

THE GINGERBREAD MAN

15

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL STORY BY JOHN GRISHAM
 POLYGRAM FILMED ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A BRAND PICTURES AND ENCOUNTER ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A ROBERT ALTMAN FILM "THE GINGERBREAD MAN" KENNETH BRANAGH EMBETH DAVIDTZ ROBERT DOWNEY JR. DARYL HANNAH TOM BERINGER AND ROBERT DUVAL CASTING BY STEPHEN ALTMAN COSTUME DESIGNER PERCIVAL ARNOLD CHAMOWEY GILLES WITH MARK HAYES GLEN & THOMAS TODD HAYES WRITTEN BY JEREMY THOMASMAN PRODUCED BY JEREMY THOMASMAN DIRECTED BY ROBERT ALTMAN

STARTS TOMORROW
 WALTON VILLAGE
 ABC
 WHITELIPS
 ODEON KENSINGTON 0181 315 4214
 ODEON SWISS COTTAGE 0181 315 4220
 ODEON MARBLE ARCH 0181 315 4210
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PASSED FOR ISOLATED STRONG LANGUAGE



Anna Murdoch, and Rupert at home in Australia. 'She can cut me off at the knees better than anyone else.' Though widely regarded as a substantial power within the Murdoch empire, Mrs Murdoch has always played down her role

Divorce sets up battle for Murdoch billions

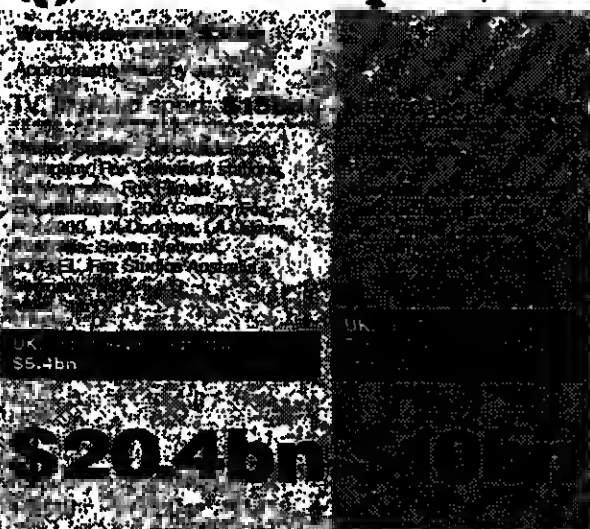
After 31 years of apparently happy marriage, Anna Murdoch has launched what may prove to be the costliest break-up of all time

Lisa Buckingham, Julia Finch and Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

ANNA MURDOCH, the wife of the world's most powerful media mogul, yesterday filed for divorce in what is likely to be the costliest marriage break-up of all time. A Roman Catholic who was always thought unlikely to seek a divorce, the mother-of-three has chosen to file her suit in California, where she could get half Rupert Murdoch's share in the \$30 billion News Corporation empire. The petition was filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court by Mrs Murdoch's lawyer Daniel Jaffe, a high-powered Beverly Hills attorney. He declined to comment on the case, but the wording on the petition hinted at a long legal ordeal for Mr Murdoch. It stated that Anna Murdoch does not know the exact extent of her husband's multi-billion dollar fortune, but intends to find out. The petition said Mrs Murdoch 'is unaware of the full nature of the assets and obligations... and will amend this petition after discovery or at trial.' Mr Jaffe will now press Mr Murdoch to reveal his vast portfolio of assets, which could take years.

Mr Murdoch once said of his wife: 'She can cut me off at the knees better than anyone else.'

News Corporation



Mrs Murdoch stands to get half of all the Murdoch possessions. Apart from a luxury yacht, fleet of cars and one third of News Corp, the couple own several homes around the world. They include a \$4 million Penthouse apartment in London's St James's, overlooking Green Park, and a \$5 million house on the Upper East Side in New York. There is also a sprawling \$15 million Spanish-style villa in Beverly Hills, complete with 10-car garage, a harbour-view penthouse in Sydney worth \$5 million, a mansion in Melbourne worth another \$5 million, a vast ranch and a \$20 million home in Aspen, Colorado, complete with trout stream running through the living room. Mrs Murdoch, a 53-year-old novelist, has been a main board director of her husband's media empire since 1990 and was his sheet anchor in moments of crisis, such as his near bankruptcy in the early 1990s. Though widely regarded as a substantial power within the Murdoch empire, Mrs Murdoch has always played down her role. She has said that if she had any real influ-

ence in Australia and the US. Although Mrs Murdoch's petition suggests she is unaware of the full extent of his wealth, she may have an insight into the notoriously complex offshore tax avoidance strategy which has been one of the hallmarks of News Corp's financial success for years. There are subsidiaries in territories as far flung as the Netherlands Antilles, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, which act as convenient cogs in his financial machine. The impending divorce, which comes after 31 years of apparently contented family life, throws a new cloud over the ultimate ownership of the Murdoch stake, they said, could be particularly damaging as Mr Murdoch recently announced plans to spin off his American film and television interests. They include 20th Century Fox, producers of Titanic, Independence Day and Star Wars and 22 TV companies whose output includes The Simpsons, Ally McBeal and The X-Files. He plans to sell 20 per cent of these businesses in a deal likely to value them at \$15 billion. In addition he owns cable TV networks in the US, the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team, the Star TV satellite network in Asia, The Times, Sunday Times, News of the World and The Sun in Britain as well as 40 per cent of BSkyB. Mr Murdoch still has extensive newspaper inter-

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Splitting the difference

- The biggest pre-Murdoch divorce settlement was agreed by US billionaire businessman Jack Kluge. His wife, a British-born former topless model got \$300 million, plus properties worth \$47 million in 1990
- Film director Steven Spielberg handed \$73 million to his actress wife Amy Irving after their three-year marriage ended in 1989
- The Aga Khan handed over \$50 million when he divorced Begum Aga Khan
- Last year Gary Wendt, boss of the giant US GE Capital Corporation had to hand over \$20 million to his wife Laura in recognition of her years spent as a "corporate wife"
- The UK restaurateur Sir Terence Conran was ordered by a judge to pay his ex-wife Lady Caroline £10.5 million.
- Donald and Ivana Trump divorced in 1991 after 14 years of marriage. The US property tycoon had to pay her \$14 million, plus \$350,000 a year for his children's expenses and provide a \$4 million housing allowance.

PCC clears papers that paid criminals

continued from page 1 commission". The PCC also notes that British law, which already prohibits people from profiting from their crimes, sets a six-year time limit. To extend this indefinitely would restrict people's right to free speech. It warned that this may well conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights once it is enshrined into UK law. Alan Travis writes: Civil servants were last night cen-

sured for failing to tell Home Office ministers for nearly seven weeks that the book involving Mary Bell was about to be published. Home Secretary Jack Straw faced embarrassment when he learned the truth some days after the Guardian disclosed that Bell was to earn tens of thousands of pounds as a result of the biography. Mr Straw is now also considering ways of strengthening the law to prevent con-

victed criminals from making money from memoirs. Officials are to be given new guidelines telling them they must keep ministers informed about cases "which are likely to arouse controversy and provoke concern over the adequacy of the law" even if they have no statutory power to intervene. The action follows an official inquiry into the Bell case by the Home Office's permanent secretary, David Omand,

which found that civil servants were told by the probation service as early as March 6 this year that her book would appear shortly and was likely to arouse controversy. They delayed telling ministers until it was too late. The inquiry found that Bell had frequently been the subject of attempts by newspapers and literary agents to persuade her to sell her story for substantial sums even before she left prison.

The PCC's landmark decision has shown that it is living in the real world. It is hand in hand with the law, which doesn't prohibit convicted people from earning money by writing about their crimes after a six month period.
Roy Greenslade on the PCC's adjudication

G2, cover story

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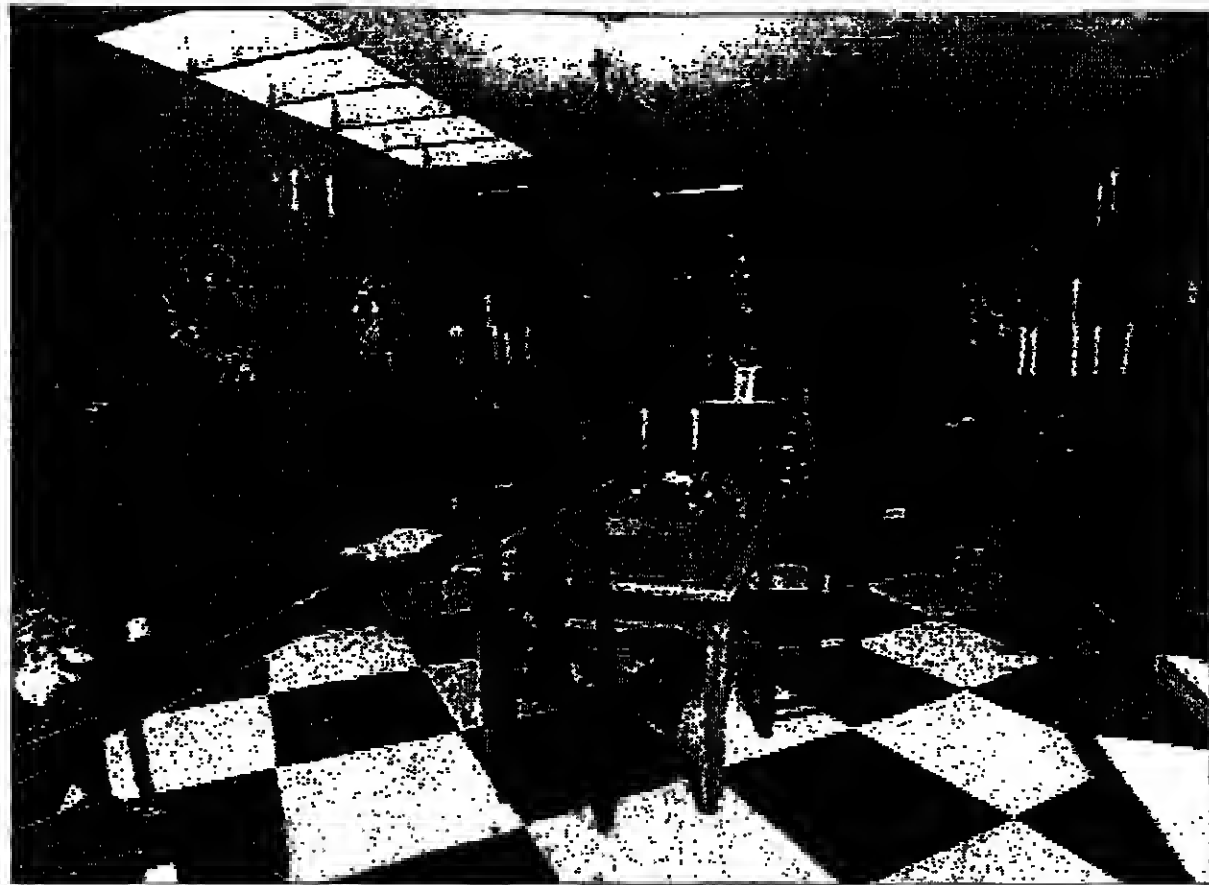


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Above, the room after the makeover which reduced Susan Dukes (centre) to tears. Right, the room in its original state



Room makeover for TV programme ends in tears

Amelia Gentleman

THE beginnings of a beautiful neighbourhood feud have been caught on camera, as a decoration makeover for the BBC's Changing Rooms series went wrong.

The show, which gets neighbours to redecorate a room in each other's homes, is fraught with potential

conflicts. But its producers were unprepared for Susan and Russell Dukes's reaction to the changes.

Mrs Dukes screamed and cried into the garden when she saw her "new" dining room.

Neighbours Phil and Caroline Cockin had worked with designer Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen to transform the Dukes's new extension into what they

hoped was an 18th-century Queen Anne-style dining room. When she recovered, Mrs Dukes described it as "a nasty mess".

She said: "I couldn't put into words how much I hated it. It looked like a cheap set for some kind of murder mystery weekend."

Executive producer Linda Clifford said the presenter, Carol Smilie, was so taken aback by their reaction

that she started shaking. "It was an awful moment. Susan's eyes filled up with tears; she was really upset. No one has ever been so horrified on the programme before — we had to cut out the bits with her crying," Ms Clifford said.

The Dukes had wanted to create a glamorous but traditional atmosphere in the dining room of their house near Hull. Instead, their neighbours decorated the walls in plum, and painted black and white squares on the concrete floor. Candle sticks were stuck to the walls with Blu-Tack and a mock fireplace was stuck on the back of the door.

As soon as the production team left, Mrs Dukes spent hours trying to restore the room to something like its previous state. The BBC has a policy of not paying for or helping with alterations if participants are unhappy.

She told the Cockins she loathed what they had done, adding: "We thought we would get a house we were proud of, not one I'm ashamed to show friends."

Ms Clifford said everyone on the programme, to be broadcast next Thursday, had been disappointed by the Dukes' response. But she added: "It's a compelling television."

Mice offer new uses for cloning

Tim Radford
Science Editor

HAWAIIAN scientists have followed Dolly the cloned sheep with replica mice.

And in a world first, they cloned more mice from the first clones.

Their work means that researchers can use clones to study what happens in cancer, AIDS, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and ageing. It could also lead to new ways of "copying" the best farm animals.

The Hawaiian team is to collaborate with PPL Therapeutics at Roslin near Edinburgh — the company which uses genetically engineered sheep to make vital human proteins — it was announced last night.

The research, published today in *Nature*, opens the way for much faster research experiments because mice breed quicker than sheep.

Ryuzo Yanagimachi of the University of Hawaii and colleagues created 50 identical mice. They took the DNA from the cell of a female adult and injected it into an egg from which the DNA had been removed. They popped the artificially fertilised egg into a surrogate mother and produced the first clone. They went on to make second and third generations of cloned mice, some of which have been mated and have raised normal offspring.

The achievement puts a stop to speculation about Dolly, the sheep that shook the world. Humans have been cloning plants for generations and animals for almost a decade. Dolly was the first creature cloned as an adult: a "carbon copy" generated from one cell from the mammary gland of a six-year-old

Finn Dorset ewe at the Roslin Institute. This, until March 1997, was believed impossible. Embryo cells can be divided to make twins. But embryo cells soon differentiate into skin, bone, blood, nerve tissue and so on: after that, the argument went, the clock could not be turned back.

But it was turned back: the Roslin researchers persuaded a six-year-old adult cell to "reset" its clock and become the nucleus of an identical infant. The announcement caused a worldwide storm, and raised the spectre of cloned humans. But late last year, researchers speculated that the Roslin team might have been misled that Dolly's parent had been pregnant at the time and that, against huge odds, the researchers had used a foetal cell which had made its way into the sheep's udder.

But the two Hawaiian reports show that cloning from adult cells can be done. And two more reports in *Nature* today put an end to the matter. A team which included Sir Alec Jeffreys, founder of genetic fingerprinting, reports that Dolly was "beyond reasonable doubt" what her makers said she was.

And a team from Roslin, led by Ian Wilmut, the scientist who presented Dolly, announced that a different technique showed the same result. "We've always been certain that Dolly was derived from an adult cell," said Harry Griffin, of the Roslin Institute.

From now on, researchers can clone with laboratory mice. Dr Griffin said: "Mice have a short generation time, they are easy to work with, they are much cheaper to work with, you can keep them in very controlled conditions, they are not seasonal breeders like sheep are."

Master designer unleashes classic turn of modernity

Susan Frankel
in Paris

THE haute couture collections ended on a high yesterday with a stunning ovation for the undisputed master of French fashion, Yves Saint Laurent.

At the end of this year Saint Laurent plans to retire from ready-to-wear fashion to concentrate on haute couture.

The Moroccan designer, Alber Elbaz, now at Guy Laroche, has been appointed to take over. Rumour is rife, however, that Saint Laurent also plans to hand over the couture before long. Jean Paul Gaultier is the designer mooted to inherit the most influential couture house of them all.

Whatever Saint Laurent decides, this latest offering once again cemented his reputation as the most important designer of the latter part of the 20th century. Truly, Yves Saint Laurent decides, this latest offering once again cemented his reputation as the most important designer of the latter part of the 20th century.

Using a muted palette, Yves Saint Laurent's use of colour — a chartreuse sash on a long black gown, a sequence of chiffon in varying shades of brightest blue — remains unsurpassed.

Thierry Mugler's show had his signature style injecting a hefty dose of high



A model in wool overcoat in Yves Saint Laurent's show yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL ELIER

camp glamour. Models, including Jerry Hall and daughter, Elizabeth Jagger, in matching outfits (mother's long and enveloping, daughter's short and revealing) strutted down the catwalk in everything from spiky pinstripe hotpants and thigh-high boots to

a giant silk puffed jacket studded with rhinestones. But where Saint Laurent's trademark still seemed entirely relevant to the modern woman, Mugler's high-gloss overt take on glamour seemed dated veering perilously close to drag. The designer did, however, score

the ultimate celebrity model appearance. Cyd Charisse looked the proverbial million dollars sashaying down in a black silk trench coat flashing her famous legs — encrusted with emeralds — and all to the delight of the audience in the Rain.

Prescott fights to prevent the closure of Sellafield

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

JOHN Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, was fighting a rearguard action last night to prevent the forced closure of the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant in Cumbria.

Ministers from 15 countries meeting in Sintra, Portugal, are trying to reach a binding agreement to cut all forms of pollution into the north-east Atlantic.

Mr Prescott said yesterday that he was proud that Britain "had transformed its image as the dirty man of Europe, a fundamental change from the last government", but conceded that negotiations were difficult on the issue of radioactivity.

He refused to accept that the negotiation was about closing individual plants and might mean the end of the two Cumbrian reprocessing works, which employ 8,000 people.

This is not about shutting Sellafield, it is about cutting discharges to as low as technically possible," he said. "I am not talking to you about dates for closure, 2020 or any others that have been mentioned, we are still in the middle of negotiations."

But Svend Auken, the Danish environment minister, described Britain as standing alone against 14 nations in Europe in refusing to accept near zero discharges of radioactivity.

Mr Auken, Britain's sternest critic at the talks, wants progressive reductions in discharges and complete closure of Sellafield by 2020.

He said the Nordic nations were particularly badly affected by Sellafield because

the discharges migrate north, affect the North Sea, the north-east Atlantic and the Arctic.

This country represented Greenland where much of the radioactivity could be found. It was also the highest political issue in Iceland, he said.

All 15 countries present, including Britain, had accepted the phasing out of dangerous chemicals, he said.

"The UK has accepted the argument on chemicals but is asking us to treat radioactivity differently than chemicals, yet we know that it does people harm. We cannot make a special case."

Mr Prescott said the issue of pipeline discharges was difficult.

The French had made a political decision to accept near to zero discharges where technically possible. That was now one of six versions in the negotiations.

"I sincerely hope that some time in the night or by this time tomorrow we will have a deal we can all sign," he said.

British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) is at the talks lobbying on behalf of the nuclear industry. Bill Anderson, for the company, said it could not achieve near zero discharges for closure, 2020 or any others that have been mentioned, we are still in the middle of negotiations."

Other issues still being debated include the disposal of oil rigs. Britain has a radically changed position in accepting that all 125 of the giant steel rigs in the North Sea should be scrapped on land. Although this was widely welcomed there is still the contentious issue of oil rig footings — the bottom 20 per cent of the structure that rests on the sea floor.

Glasgow street kids catapulted to fame by lethal weapon invention

Martin Walmsley

A LETHAL combination of Hooke's Law of Elasticity, condoms and sawn-off plastic bottles catapulted Glasgow street kids into British medical history.

Ingenious misuse of the Blue Peter principle — that anything from a toothbrush to a spaceship can be made from recycled household goods — has created a lethal new weapon: the Johnny-popper.

Made from condoms — or in multi-pellet versions, rubber gloves — the home-made catapult reverses the usual, progress-obstructing principle of the protective sheath.

Its missiles can travel at up to 120mph, according to eye specialist Kerr MacAndie, who discovered the Johnny-popper trend after questioning young eye-injury victims at Glasgow Southern General Hospital.

Serious catapult damage, including blurred vision, a cataract removal and a lens transplant are documented by Dr MacAndie in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, which also reports his joint medico-physical reconstruction of a Johnny-popper.

Assisted by a nine-year-old boy, who was treated for vision problems after

being hit by a Johnny-popper, he made and tested condom and glove versions of the device.

"We were very surprised by the velocity with which the missiles were fired," he says. His colleagues in the hospital physics department provide illustrative trajectories and speed graphs.

Johnny-popper missiles outpaced smaller-bore air-gun pellets and conformed to Robert Hooke's 1681 Law of Elasticity in Solid Bodies, which first drew scientific attention to the extreme power of string under tension.

"These catapults are the 1990s version of the peashooter to children, but they are also lethal weapons," says Dr MacAndie. "The Johnny-popper's popularity is due to a combination of ease of construction and use, portability, potential for playful mischief and ease of concealment in the classroom. But children probably don't realise the harm they can do with one. To them it is just a laugh."

Johnny-poppers are made by Dr MacAndie in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, which also reports his joint medico-physical reconstruction of a Johnny-popper.

Assisted by a nine-year-old boy, who was treated for vision problems after

Gays row leaves Lambeth Conference in disarray

Madeleine Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

HOPES of preventing the issue of homosexuality splitting the Lambeth Conference of 735 Anglican bishops, meeting in Canterbury, were in tatters yesterday after an alliance of African and evangelical bishops forced organisers to cancel a presentation by lesbian and gay Christians.

In a heated closed meeting on Tuesday night, the head of the section considering human sexuality, the Rt Rev Duncan Buchanan of Johannesburg was said to be "traumatised" and "shellshocked" by the "ferocity of the feelings" expressed in an opening debate on the subject. Homosexuality was likened to bestiality and child abuse.

A presentation led by the Rev Colin Coward, a gay London priest, and 20 lesbian and gay ordained and lay Christians was to have been made in the section's second meeting today, but opponents of further liberalisation voted by a two-thirds majority to cancel the 90 minute session arranged by the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev Njongonkulu Ndungane.

"One African bishop said if we are going to talk to lesbians and gays, why don't we discuss bestiality and child abuse," said one of the section participants, the veteran gay rights campaigner, the Rt Rev Jack

Spong, Bishop of Newark, New Jersey. "The Third World bishops combined with the evangelical bishops could pass a negative resolution on homosexuality. There is a huge gap between bishops on this question. It was a very discouraging meeting. People felt it was impossible to bridge this enormous chasm," added Bishop Spong, who claims the backing of 88 bishops for a resolution supportive of the recognising homosexual rights in the Anglican Communion.

Mr Coward, of the gay and lesbian organisation, Changing Attitudes, remains hopeful that the presentation may take place next week. He had arranged for seven gays and lesbians to describe their experiences as Christians as well as a question and answer session.

He said: "Everyone knows there are strong divergent views but no one expected the group to rent itself apart so suddenly and so quickly. Bishop Buchanan was shellshocked by the ferocity of the feelings and traumatised."

Bishops were to have been told in the presentation that "gay, lesbian and bisexual people are called by God to express their sexuality in loving, faithful and committed relationships" and that "same-sex orientation is a God-given reality for a large minority of people, not a sin or a sickness."

Bishops were to be told to stop colluding in discrimination of gays and lesbians, and

that they had to re-evaluate the Bible. Richard Kirby, of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, claimed the latent and virulent homophobia in the Anglican Church had erupted into the open. These men have chosen not to listen. They are incapable of even meeting us halfway," he said.

Lesbian and gay campaigners are concerned that there has been a concerted attempt by opponents of homosexual rights to get a majority in this crucial section of 60 bishops to put the brakes on any initiative by the liberal wing. They are planning to highlight the issue today by wearing rainbow ribbon badges.

Many African bishops are dismissive of homosexuality, an issue which they consider trivial compared with international debt and relations with Islam. Conservative evangelicals from the US, Australia, Asia and England insist that the Bible forbids homosexuality.

Months of careful negotiation to secure a compromise that the issue should be referred to an international commission is now in danger of collapse.

But the Most Rev Richard Holloway, the Bishop of Edinburgh, a lesbian and gay rights campaigner who will host a reception for the Lesbian and Gay Christian movement was optimistic that the Anglican tradition of agreeing to disagree would prevail.

Sarah Hall

THE businessman Asil Nadir consumed champagne and caviar during his flight from British justice, the Old Bailey heard yesterday.

The details of Nadir's celebratory escape emerged during the trial of Peter Dimond, the pilot who allegedly helped the 57-year-old tycoon breach his bail terms and evade a trial for theft and false accounting by flying him out of British jurisdiction.

Dimond, aged 56, of Petersfield, Hampshire, denies tending and intending to pervert the course of justice between January and May 1993.

The court heard that Nadir, former head of the Polly Peck business conglomerate, celebrated in Vienna after fleeing Britain, where he faced criminal charges in May 1993.

As his private jet refuelled, he took refreshments — not lukewarm coffee and biscuits, but champagne and caviar, for no doubt this was, for Asil Nadir, the time for celebration," said Julian Bevan, QC, prosecuting.

When the jet landed at Istanbul, en route to the entrepreneur's final destination of northern Cyprus, the celebrations continued.

"There was a welcoming party and more celebrations on and off the plane. It all has the hallmarks of a triumphal flight home," Mr Bevan said.

Dimond viewed Nadir as a "degraded to the point of desperation" who needed a break to put his case together, the court was told.

But "he knew full well that Asil Nadir's bail conditions prohibited him from leaving this country and going beyond these shores, out of jurisdiction," Mr Bevan said.

The court heard that Dimond — who bought and sold airplanes and was "well connected in the world of flying" — arranged for Nadir to take

"There was a was a welcoming party and more celebrations on and off the plane"

a small, twin-engine plane at Compton Abbas, Dorset. The businessman, sporting dark glasses and a hat, went unrecognised as he and Dimond boarded the craft bound for Beauvais, near Paris.

At Beauvais, they took a second jet, via Vienna and Istanbul, to northern Cyprus, where Nadir remains.

Dimond — who said he believed Nadir would return to Britain to face trial — allegedly realised he would face trouble if he returned.

"He would certainly have not received the same wel-

come Asil Nadir received having arrived in north Cyprus," Mr Bevan said.

He subsequently opted to stay there for the next five years, leaving in January this year. He was arrested in Haverfordwest, west Wales, where he allegedly told officers: "I am the person who flew Asil Nadir out of the country. I have no regrets for doing this."

The court heard that Dimond had met Nadir through his wife in the mid-1970s, and agreed to help him after attending a jewellery sale party in 1983 "during which Nadir explained his plight".

The entrepreneur claimed he could not get his defence prepared as papers were removed from his home or office, and spoke of people being bribed.

Dimond "saw Nadir as a man who had been unfairly treated, a shadow of his former self who walked with a stick and had a grey pallor," Mr Bevan said.

Dimond allegedly told officers: "I am a reasonable, fair-minded person. I felt he was not getting the opportunity to present a defence."

"I know in my own life, if that happened to me, I would want to back off and go somewhere where I could have peace and quiet and put my house in order."

"This man needed time and a break... I felt he deserved that time."

The trial continues.

كلنا من الاصل

A sniper's bullet, poisoned tea... Richard Norton-Taylor reports on 'low methods' devised by secret agents to shorten the war

Britain's plan to kill Hitler revealed

FRANK WILKINSON

I received a letter from S.O.E. this morning telling me that they had had information from a source that Hitler was in the Alps and asking whether the Chiefs of Staff agreed in principle to his immediate execution. The Chiefs of Staff were unanimous that, from the strictly military point of view, it was almost an advantage that Hitler should remain in control of German strategy, having regard to the blunders that he has made, but that on the wider point of view, the sooner he was got out of the way the better.

2. Since then the telegram at Flag "A" has been received from Ambassador Duff Cooper. I am told that, with your approval, the Foreign Secretary is instructing him to go ahead.

B RITISH secret agents plotted to assassinate Hitler during the final months of the second world war after gathering extraordinarily detailed intelligence about his personal habits and the layout of his Alpine retreat, documents made public today reveal.

They show that agents of the Special Operations Executive, set up to work undercover behind enemy lines, drew up elaborate plans — codenamed Foxley — to kill Hitler by a sniper's shot at the retreat, an attack on his special train, or poisoning his tea.

The plot is disclosed in hundreds of hitherto secret documents about SOE activities released at the Public Record Office. Three files on SOE operations in the Irish Republic are conspicuously absent.

Among potential assassins considered by SOE were foreign workers employed at Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgarden in the Bavarian Alps. One SOE officer even contemplated hypnotising Rudolf Hess into carrying out the job. Hess, Hitler's former deputy, flew to Britain in 1941 in an apparent attempt to persuade Britain to make peace with Germany.

The seeds of the plan to liquidate Hitler were sown by Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary — were sown by a French colonel, who discovered in June 1944 that Hitler was staying in a chateau near Perpignan in south-west France. He suggested to SOE staff working with Free French forces in Algeria that the allies should bomb the chateau. Though that opportunity was missed, SOE agents in Algiers urged London to take up the idea.

General Sir Hastings Ismay, secretary to the war cabinet, told Churchill that the chiefs of staff were unanimous "that, from the strictly military point of view, it was almost an advantage that Hitler should remain in control of German strategy, having regard to the blunders that he has made, but that on the wider point of view, the sooner he was got out of the way the better".

After speaking to C — the Chief of M16, Sir Stewart Menzies — about the assassination plot, Major General

Colin Gubbins, head of SOE, told his staff: "I cannot say he was exactly enthusiastic... but I told him we would be grateful for any help he could give in keeping track of the gentleman".

Strong opposition came from Major Field-Robertson, head of SOE's German section and identified in the documents only as X. Assassination would "conscience" Hitler, he warned, adding that "it would be disastrous if the world came to think that the Allies had to resort to these low methods as they were otherwise unable to defeat the German military machine".

SOE agents initially considered killing Hitler by chemical or bacterial agents, the documents show. SOE described one unidentified substance as the most suitable because of its delayed action. SOE agents noted: "Hitler, according to reliable information, is a tea addict. He always drinks it with milk. Since the milk is poured first into the cup, it is unlikely that the tea's opulence [because of the poison] would be noticed as it came from the teapot".

A 122-page SOE document on the elimination of Hitler contains astonishing detail, provided by informants, about Hitler's movements and the layout of his Alpine retreat.

"Hitler is a late riser", it notes, "never getting up before 0900 or 1000 hrs". He then "strolls to breakfast". Lunch was at 4pm — "vegetables only".

He worked until about 10pm, usually with his mistress, Eva Braun. He then conducted a daily conference on the military situation. "0100-0130 supper as for lunch; 0300-0400 or later he goes to bed".

The document describes the times of SS dog patrols guarding the complex, and contains extremely detailed drawings of buildings and Hitler's train.

In March 1945, SOE indicated it had in mind Captain E H Bennett, a military attaché at the embassy in Washington, as the assassin. But a month later, the project was abandoned. SOE was told that events had moved on and the kind of operation it had prepared was no longer under consideration.



Hitler at Berchtesgarden, and (above left) a secret memo to Churchill from General Sir Hastings Ismay about the plot

Roulette with a difference and brothels on the fjords

ORGIES in which naked girls on white horses gave "spirited readings" of Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, and "floating brothels" on Norwegian fjords featured in a black propaganda campaign by British agents — based not entirely on their imagination.

SOE officers used known sexual peccadilloes to paint a picture of a decadent Nazi leadership to undermine its authority and the morale of German soldiers.

SOE picked out Christian Wehr, the Munich Nazi Party chief, who was, it said, well known for his orgies. "A particular attraction at this time was a large roulette wheel on which a naked girl had been strapped."

A Wehrmacht soldier was alleged to have reported how Wehr, "drunk as usual, was acting as croupier and set the table in motion. The audience of mainly SS men sat ready round the table. The gentleman opposite the girl when the wheel stops then obliges."

Pointing out that efforts to extract fat from human sewage were proving ineffective, the counterfeited document says: "It is the duty of every hotel manager in the interests of public welfare, to promote in every way possible the recuperation of fat... Heil Hitler."

But the documents show that SOE experienced failure as well as success. A decision to parachute a German-born Jewish agent to sabotage Germany's V2 rocket production ended in spectacular failure.

Lieutenant Robert Baker-Byrne was immediately approached by a plainclothes detective who recognised him from pre-war days.

One Berliner came up to him, saying "Becker [Baker-Byrne's family name], I always thought you were a Jew. How did you get into uniform?" Baker-Byrne fled to neutral Switzerland.

SOE officers, meanwhile, had a furious row with M16, a rival agency, accusing it of failing to pass on intelligence about the penetration by German agents of the SOE network in Holland — a disaster for the Dutch resistance.

SOE reported "a good time was had by all", though the girls finished up unconscious.

An SOE document, *Sexologist's Stories*, is headed *Adults Only*, with a warning that it touches on "a rather ticklish subject". It says: "Himmler, head of the SS, was purported to be 'protector' of a cult with the naked congregation indulging in orgies to the accompaniment of 'encouraging chanting' from the high priestess — a lead singer of the Berlin State Opera."

Theodor Auer, the German consul in Casablanca, is described as "a queer" who was often seen on the beach with "Arab, French and Jewish bunnies". Oberleutnant Schmidt, the German propaganda chief in Paris, is described as a uniform fetishist who held gay orgies in his chateau at Brié, east of the French capital, with a swimming pool "with black mirror glass... bathers are naked; parties take place in and out of the water".

SOE referred to pornography circulating among German soldiers in Africa which "quite frankly would make many a virgin turn in her grave". Officials in the Political Warfare Executive forged leaflets claiming the necessity of keeping up the German birth rate by allowing SS men to take the place of husbands who were at the front.

Führer was replaced by Himmler on forged stamps

POSTAGE stamps with the head of Heinrich Himmler, the SS chief, replacing Hitler's, changed hands among collectors at the end of the war at enormous prices, much to the amusement of the British agents who forged them, documents released yesterday show.

Sefton Delmer, a journalist assigned to the wartime Political Warfare Executive, and SOE agents devised the plan to sow discord in Germany by encouraging rumours of a plot to get rid of Hitler.

The six-pfennig stamps, franked with forged German postal addresses, were sent by SOE to neutral countries, including Sweden and Portugal. SOE then successfully planted stories in Swiss and British newspapers encouraging speculation about dissent in the Nazi hierarchy.

One letter, franked with a Stuttgart postmark, led a puzzled Nazi administration to admit that the stamps had been produced in error. Stamp collectors were not bothered — they were said to be willing to pay any price to get their hands on them.

"It is for this reason that we must keep our hands absolutely clean and our mouths

tightly shut," Delmer warned a colleague.

The play was among many devised by British agents to destabilise Germany, including anonymous letters sent to hereafter German parents claiming their soldier sons had contracted cholera and had been given a "mercy injection", and forged instruction to German hoteliers urging them to save fat.

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Death ends celebrated partnership

John Ezard

MICHAEL Denison, who with his wife Dulcie Gray forged the most durable stage and film partnership since the second world war, has died at the age of 82, it was announced yesterday.

Their theatrical bond lasted almost as long as the 56 years of their marriage. The couple also kept their romantic afterglow as film matinee idols of the late 1940s and early 1950s, a time when most of the British public went to the cinema once or twice a week.

The films in which they acted together included the immensely popular *The Glass Mountain* and *My Brother Jonathan*. When television started to seduce film audiences, Mr Denison switched to it easily in high-profile shows like *Boyd QC* and the spy series *Cold Warrior*.

He died of cancer on Tuesday at his home in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, after a short illness. Another veteran film star and friend from their youth, Sir John

Mills, was comforting Ms Gray.

Their theatrical agent, Barry Burnett, said yesterday: "Michael was one half of the most famous acting partnership we have seen."

"His last stage appearance was with Dulcie Gray in their two-person show *Curtain Up*, an evening of reminiscences, at the Jermyn Street theatre in London in April of this year. They were due to present it at another theatre again soon."

Between them, the couple acted in 90 West End productions — 30 of them together.

Obituary, page 10



Michael Denison as Boyd QC (left) in 1957 and with Dulcie Gray in *A Coat of Varnish* (1982)

Extra role for schools

John Garvel
Education Editor

THE Government yesterday set out a vision of how schools will change in the 21st century to become "children's centres" available throughout the year to provide healthcare for toddlers as well as education for the whole community from cradle to grave.

Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, told MPs that it was no longer acceptable that school buildings were closed for nearly half the year. They should become community assets offering a wide range of services outside normal school hours.

Headteachers would provide educational leadership and set the key management priorities, but they would delegate many of their present duties to bursars who would

become responsible for meals, transport, buildings maintenance and administration.

Mr Byers said he was talking with health ministers about dovetailing investment programmes to share facilities in primary schools. They would become bases for the Sure Start programme announced by the Chancellor last week to bring together nursery, childcare and playgroup provision with post-natal and other health services.

Parents taking their children for a medical check-up would be told how to encourage early learning. "We want to combine children's services on one site... We will make links that are not there at the moment. For example we can identify at a very early age the children who are at risk of truanting."

By involving local authority social services depart-

ments, the primary centres could encourage early remedial action, he told the Commons education committee.

Secondary schools would also develop a wider role, forging links with employers and making their sports and learning facilities available to a wider community. "We are spending £2 billion on capital investment in schools which are open for 52 per cent of the days of the year and we are not yet getting a proper return on that big investment," he said.

A green paper in the autumn would pave the way for these changes by reforming teachers' pay, pensions and conditions. It would include plans to broaden the role of headteachers so they could become "educational leaders", developing their schools into community learning resource centres.

A lot of the administrative work could be delegated to bursars who might organise purchasing committees covering groups of primary schools.

The green paper would consider ways of persuading teachers to stay in the profession. Starting salaries were attractive for graduates, but many were leaving in their late 20s when pay levels slipped behind those available in other jobs.

Mr Byers said he would take a hard line on failing schools. "There are some which are beyond redemption. If they are... drifting in to failure for a substantial period of time, my view is that they should be closed and the places allocated to schools which are performing well."

The money saved should be spent expanding other schools where parents want to send their children.

Sky bid to woo middle classes

Kamali Ahmed
Media Editor

RUPERT Murdoch's Sky satellite service launched an attempt to woo the middle classes yesterday, when it announced an upmarket overhaul of its film channels.

Sky Movies and the Movie Channel will be replaced by three services — Premier, MovieMax and Sky Cinema. At £24.99 a month, the cost will remain the same for the two top services — which will automatically include Sky Cinema.

Announcing the second relaunch of the struggling movie service in under a

year, Elizabeth Murdoch, Sky general manager, said she wanted to "extend the breadth and scope" of Sky's appeal. "After extensive customer research we have concluded that we can improve our service by creating differentiated channels that have a clear personality," she said.

Sky also announced details of a major move into film and programme making, and said it would put aside £20 million for exclusive deals with filmmakers to take their films straight to satellite before cinema release.

Barry Norman, who left the BBC last month for a reported £350,000 salary at Sky, spoke about his new film pro-

gramme, Barry Norman's Film Night, which will be on the Premier channel.

He said it would build on the strengths of the BBC's long-running Film 99 series.

"Reviews of the films of the week will still be the backbone, but we will have many other clever ideas to make this the definitive film programme," he said.

"The BBC shifted the programme I did for them all over the place. It was a way of managing their ratings, which is what the managers became obsessed with."

Sky hopes that the changes, with Mr Norman known to appeal to an upmarket audience, will encourage new subscri-

ers to the service which has seen subscriptions stagnate at around 2.9 million. The movie service's share of all viewing has also been falling, with the channel claiming 26 audiences of above 1 million for individual movies in 1996, compared with 22 last year.

Executives believe the company now has to move beyond its core "football and films" audience, and encourage new subscribers. Many people appear to be waiting for the launch of Sky's digital satellite service in the autumn.

Premier will show blockbuster first releases. MovieMax will offer "harder edge" films, and Sky Cinema will show popular classic films.

Socialists give French employers £2.7bn gift

Paul Webster in Paris

FRANCE'S Socialist-led government appeared to signal a shift to the right yesterday when it rejected demands for more public spending and approved a £2.7 billion tax cut for businesses in next year's budget.

The tax reduction, praised as economic realism by employers' leaders, was announced by the finance minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. Supported by the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, Mr Strauss-Kahn rejected internal pressure to concentrate the 1999 budget directly on job creation schemes, but claimed the concession to employers would enable them to recruit 100,000 more workers.

He dismissed traditional left-wing demands for more state aid for health and social programmes, promising even stricter spending cuts to reduce the public deficit to below the European single currency criterion of 2 per cent of GDP over the next 18 months.

Traditional left values were lampooned in a cartoon in the daily newspaper Le Monde, showing a cigar-smoking boss in a car clutching a bag marked 27 billion francs. They laugh as Mr Jospin tells them: "I give you 27 billion francs, but I'll take back two centimes for the diesel."

The drawing referred to another reform in yesterday's package that will raise the cost of diesel fuel over the next seven years to the same level as petrol, an anti-pollution measure to please the Greens. The package includes a symbolic tax increase on the 800 biggest personal fortunes, and a cut in VAT on household gas and electricity.

When the changes come before parliament in this autumn, Gaullists are expected to join communists and the Socialist Party's militant wing to press for a revision of priorities. Yesterday, the Gaullist-RPR said there was no benefit for the middle classes which had made the biggest contribution to economic recovery.

Mr Jospin's huge popularity after a year in office — his opinion poll ratings run at between 65 and 70 per cent — will enable him to ride out attacks over his reluctance to spread the benefits of a big economic upswing. Any lack of support on the left will be balanced by the enthusiasm of business leaders for a measure that removes taxes based on a calculation of the total wage bill. It will help to smooth the introduction of a 35-hour week by 2002.

Yvon Gattaz, the chairman of an association of big family-owned firms, said the reform was common sense and a continuation of concessions approved by two Gaullist prime ministers, Edouard Balladur and Alain Juppé, since 1993. The employers' equivalent of the CRR, the CNPF, described the package as "a good thing" saying "economic realism has prevailed".

After a mix of major and minor fiscal changes since the leftwing victory a year ago, overall tax revenue will decrease by more than £2 billion annually from next year. Mr Strauss-Kahn said this would be compensated for by increased income from improved economic growth.

"At the very least, predictions of a 3 per cent growth rate will be fulfilled," he said, adding that forecasts of 300,000 new jobs would be exceeded.

Migrants spur Rome to act

John Hooper in Rome

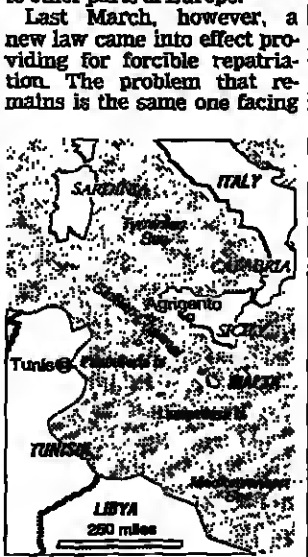
ALMOST 3,000 illegal migrants have poured into Italy since the start of July, the interior minister revealed yesterday.

As the government prepared a new initiative aimed at stemming the influx from North Africa, Giorgio Napolitano told a parliamentary committee that more than half of those detained in the latest wave were picked up on or near the islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa. The remainder had landed on the mainland in the southern regions of Calabria and Puglia.

Recent warm weather and calm seas have provided traffickers with ideal conditions. Migrants from North Africa, Albania, Kosovo, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian sub-continent and the Far East have all been reported among those detained in recent weeks.

As usual, some have failed to reach Europe alive. Coast guards on Pantelleria said earlier this week they had picked up the bodies of eight African men who their companions said had drowned after being forced overboard by traffickers anxious not to come too close to the shore. Most of the migrants landing on Italy's Mediterranean islands arrive on Tunisian-registered fishing boats. In the next few days, Mr Napolitano is expected to present to cabinet a plan to be put to the Tunisian authorities. According to newspaper reports, it would offer help in funding the equipment and resources needed to intercept traffickers near their ports of origin. Until recently, Italy was an easy target for migrants seeking to enter Europe. Entry without a visa was not normally an offence. Migrants were served with an expulsion order. But they were not escorted to the frontier, with the result that most either went to ground in Italy or fled to other parts of Europe.

Last March, however, a new law came into effect providing for forcible repatriation. The problem that remains is the same one facing



other countries — what to do with those who arrive without documents and refuse to disclose their country of origin?

Officials are understood to be seeking another deal with Tunisia that would allow them to return not only Tunisian nationals, but anyone setting off from Tunisia.

Rome's problems with immigration have a more far-reaching impact. Last year Italy was admitted to the European Union's Schengen group of states that allow travel without a passport across mutual borders.



A nurse holds a child's hand at a hospital in Wau, southern Sudan. Famine is deepening in the country's rebel-held south

PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC FEFERBERG

UN watchmen accused of averting gaze from ethnic abuses inside Macedonia

Jonathan Steele in Gostivar, Macedonia

UNLIKE in Serbia's Kosovo province — where de facto apartheid means Serbs and ethnic Albanians go to their own cafes, schools and shops — Macedonia's two main communities still share amenities.

Yet for many Albanians, the empty mayoral chair in the western town of Gostivar is a more potent symbol than the integration of public facilities. Mayor Rudi Osman recently started a seven-year prison term for flying the Albanian flag over the town hall. And the mayor of northern Tetovo, Aladdin Demiri, received 2½ years for a similar offence.

The mayors' supporters reject ministers' defence of the sentences as punishment for "separatism". "We accept the Macedonian state. That is not the

problem," says Menduh Thaci, the vice-president of the Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSE). "The issue is equal rights."

Foreign diplomats, he says, are "obsessed with stability, but it's on the back of the Albanians here". What the diplomats fear is that the north-western regions of Macedonia, where ethnic Albanians are in a majority, might try to secede and join Albania proper. A string of Western ministers travels ritually to the Macedonian capital, Skopje, to pledge support for President Kiro Gligorov.

They also like to trumpet Unprejudice — the border force of foreign police and 750 American and Scandinavian troops who back them — as the first United Nations peacekeeping mission to be put in place before a war, in hopes of preventing a conflict. This week Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, urged that the force be enlarged.

The official mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force is to "strengthen Macedonia's security and stability".

From hi-tech watchtowers in the forests bordering Kosovo, the force guards Macedonia from a menace they call spill-over. But Macedonia's Albanians say the danger is not spill-

pendence, its ruling elite has tried to develop a new identity by, among other moves, defining the region's medieval churches as Macedonian Orthodox and by putting frescoes on the banknotes.

It has also riled its neighbours. The Orthodox church in Serbia refuses to accept the new ecclesiastical

"The international forces haven't finished their job," says an ethnic Albanian politician. "They should help to democratise this country"

over from Kosovo's communal independence fight, but existing abuses in Macedonia which the UN forces and foreign diplomats are doing very little to alter.

Macedonia was the most reluctant of the four republics that left Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Since inde-

cal definitions, Bulgaria refuses to accept Macedonian as a separate language, and Greece even rejects the state's right to call itself Macedonia.

Albanians say a vital opportunity is being missed. "The international forces in Macedonia haven't fin-

ished their job. They should help to democratise this country," says Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the PDSE. They support the government "because they want a quiet situation, so we haven't had a transition from a communist state. We have just recycled communists in power."

Mr Xhaferi broke from the main Albanian party, the Party of Democratic Prosperity, which has five seats in the cabinet of the governing coalition. He says the party failed to win restoration of language and other rights.

"The government defines this state as mono-ethnic and marginalises other ethnic groups," says Mr Xhaferi. There is very little Albanian-language higher education, and Albanians are losing out in managerial jobs, he claims. Less than 5 per cent of the country's army officers are Albanian. Even in towns such as Tetovo and Gostivar where

85 per cent of the population is Albanian, most policemen are Macedonian.

Blagoj Handziski, the foreign minister, says it is unreasonable for one minority to be treated as a nation when the country has four others — Turks, Serbs, Roma and Vlachs. "We cannot accept any federalisation. We prefer a civil society with equal rights for all."

On the right, Macedonian chauvinism is rising. The VMRO, a hardline party with a long pedigree of violent nationalism, calls for the government to sack its Albanian ministers. The party is gaining support. The number of Macedonians who support the Albanians is tiny.

"Most people are Albanophobes, just as in Serbia," says Branko Geroski, the editor of Dnevnik. "The main issue here is the ethnic one. Inside the country, this will make the difference between peace and war."

Communist offered cabinet job

James Mack in Moscow

A COMMUNIST MP who was the last head of the Soviet Union's discredited state planning organisation, Gosplan, was offered a senior government job yesterday by the prime minister, Sergei Kiriyenko.

With the ink barely dry on the International Monetary Fund's emergency loan to Russia, granted on the promise of tougher economic reforms, Mr Kiriyenko said Yuri Maslyukov, aged 61, was to become the country's trade and industry minister.

There was uncertainty last night as to whether Mr Maslyukov, who played a key role in drafting the economic programme of the Communist Party, was ready to take up the job in defiance of his party.

comment until President Boris Yeltsin confirmed the appointment. If he accepts the post, it will be anything but good news for Mr Zyruganov.

Mr Kiriyenko's announcement bears the hallmarks of a classic Yeltsin manoeuvre, directed from the northern forests of Karelia where the president is holidaying.

Mr Maslyukov is one of the most prominent moderates in the Communist Party's 134-strong parliamentary group — he was among the party MPs who voted to confirm Mr Kiriyenko as prime minister in April. His move to the government could hasten the long-predicted Communist split between social democrats and radical Soviet revivalists.

The politician headed Gosplan in its darkest years, from 1988 to 1991, when the Soviet economic system under Mikhail Gorbachev was lurching towards breakdown.

He now favours the free market, in its controlled East Asian form, believes in limited protectionism and supports the latest IMF loan programme. As trade and industry minister, he would have wide responsibilities but little money to work with and limited access to the fragile triangle of financial, energy and welfare policy on which Russian stability depends.

"It's not such an important ministry. It doesn't determine macro-economic policy," said Andrei Plomkowski, a political analyst. "He will be involved in areas he is familiar with. The political advantages of his appointment outweigh any potential economic conservatism."

"He's from the social democratic wing of the party. This is a person who has openly challenged Zyruganov."

Mr Maslyukov's move will probably be followed by more job offers to regional leaders, as an isolated Mr Yeltsin and Mr Kiriyenko try to build political support against the radical opposition and, more dangerous to them, the clique of powerful industrial barons who see their patrimones threatened by the new economic climate.

Hours before Mr Kiriyenko announced Mr Maslyukov's appointment, a group of Russia's biggest oil companies issued a joint statement warning the government of violence if it did not change course. "The irreversible socio-economic occurrences which could take place in the next two to three months will be a direct result of the actions of the government, which has had enough opportunities to change the situation," the statement said. "We insist measures are taken without delay to prevent the crisis getting worse."

Greece puts super-clean island beaches to the Internet surf test

Nelena Smith in Athens

WITH a little help from the Internet, British tourists can now surf the Greek waves before they set foot in sunny Hellas.

Access the Website and you'll get a daily fix of sea conditions and a review of the best island beaches. A \$28 million monitoring programme aims both to promote and protect what the ancients were quick to see as Greece's biggest natural asset — the sea.

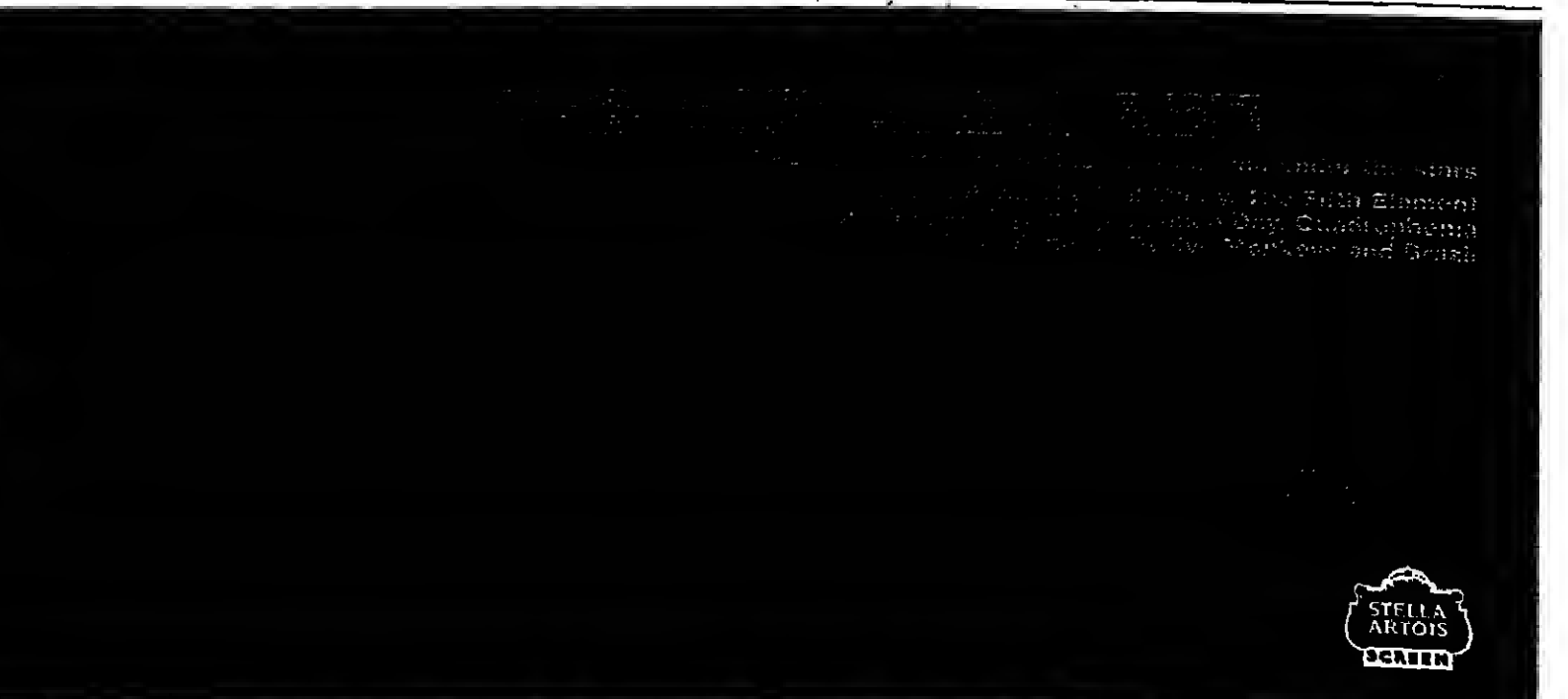
Every summer for six months, 1,217 swimming spots will be monitored at 1,705 sampling points for pollutants ranging from seaweed invasions to dangerous jellyfish and oil spills. The results will be recorded in cyberspace daily.

"Around 60 per cent of the population and 90 per cent of

the tourist industry is concentrated in coastal areas," the Greek environment minister, Kostas Laliotis, said. "These environmentally sensitive zones are the key to our ecological and economic future."

Mr Laliotis said although a recent pan-European survey had declared Greek beaches the best on the continent, the government had poured money into a huge clean-up operation along island and mainland shores.

"Dirty coasts mean a downgraded environment and downgraded tourist industry," he said. "We don't care how much money it takes, we will take the lead in Europe and save our coasts and seas."



Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

I AM transfixed by rumours of an old friend, Richard Littlejohn, word has it, is attempting to buy his beloved Tottenham Hotspur from its sweet-natured owner Alan Sugar. When Mr Sugar took over the club, he announced that should Spurs fail to win the Premiership title in the next three seasons, he would gladly let "some other rocket scientist" have a go. It was Richard's intention, we gather, on returning to the Sun last year, to use his first column to unclock himself as that rocket scientist. Alas, a first approach was met with indifference, while a meeting with Mr Sugar in February was indecisive. Even Richard's astounding salary from the Sun and Sky TV would not run to the tens of millions Mr Sugar would want, and his financial backer is thought to be Peterborough FC chairman Peter Boizot, a founder of the Pizza Express chain. Mr Boizot fails to return our call, and so does Richard who is on holiday in Florida. So we must be patient before learning whether our most cerebral man of letters may shortly ride to poor old Tottenham's rescue. If so, one thing is certain. Make it up you undoubtedly could not.

A Nonymous letter arrives (for legal reasons, we cannot say from where) claiming that a local MP is facing legal action from a constituent over alleged "rudeness and threats". We would be happy to hear from that constituent, if he or she cares to call.

WHILE John Major puts the finishing touches to his memoirs, his mouth is a little fed up. "Well, I'm a little fed up," says Terry, when my colleague Simon Bowers calls to check on him. "Since I got back from Alaska, I've been doing a spot of gardening. The lawn needs mowing and the bushes need a trim. And I'm thinking of remodelling the front garden as well. I think I'll do away with the grass." But why? "It's too much for my back. I can stick that pea-shingle stuff down. And then — and then — what you think of the idea — I can get one of those nice big tubs, cut the bottom out, and bury it up to the rim to make a small bed. You know, those new plastic tubs that look like weathered stone. What do you think?" We think it sounds splendid, and this tantalising snippet alone, we hereby appoint Terry Major-Ball the Diary's first Gardening Correspondent.

FROM Labour North West in Worthington comes a newsletter, Rosette, concerning next June's elections to the European parliament. Apart from explaining the D'Hont electoral system, Rosette prints an example of the ballot paper that will be used, on which each major party lists its candidates. The Green Party goes example, will field, among others, Snowflake Smith and Zing Zing Zippy. While there is nothing surprising here, the name of one Labour candidate catches the eye. Listed at number eight is a certain Dolly Draper. He's back, just as he promised us... but sooner than anyone can possibly have dreamt.

MEANWHILE, Dolly seeks to recruit staff for his excellent magazine Progress. "Committed, loyal party members who want a say in the direction of labour government, sought for Progress, the Labour activists network," reads the advert. "Open mind but firm principles necessary." Firm what? "Little remuneration." Ah yes, leading by example. But of course.

THE Diary's long quest for a picture of Oofy Wegg-Prosser may soon be over. Private Eye has one, and prints it in an exclusive article revealing for the first time the 17 most important people in Britain Dolly referred to recently. Oofy (whose cousin Gussy Fink-Nottle is also named among the 17) is a surprisingly handsome young thing, and bears an almost eerie facial resemblance to Macaulay Culkin. We will be negotiating a price with Ian Hislop, and hope to publish it here very shortly.

Pushing back the perverted tide of Camp, cross-dressing F.U.T.H.I! (Fig 1)



It is Paddy's anniversary waltz, but Blair is still calling the tune

Hugo Young



AFTER 10 years, the moment of truth is proscribed. In politics more than most trades, triumph intermingles with the prospect of calamity. Indeed is often defined by the proximity of ruin staring the hero in the face, only to be miraculously avoided.

So things are with Paddy Ashdown. Ten years is a long time to survive alongside Thatcher, Major and Hague, not to mention Kinnock, Smith and Blair. Survival is not what Mr Ashdown, with some justice, would say he has done. Forty-six MPs and 25 per cent of the local election vote speak for something better. But apothecosis lives in the shadow of disaster.

This is why Paddy won't be retiring soon. Poised on the edge, he thinks political life has never been more thrilling. The Liberal project, under the hand of a basically Liberal leader by the name of Blair, is coming about. The progressive left emerges as the bastard progeny of Harold Wilson, more truly the descendant of Jo Grimond. But will Ashdown and his Liberal Democrats come into their inheritance? We will know in about three months.

The answer depends on a single event, the response to Lord Jenkins's commission on electoral reform. This is what progressive politics will soon be almost all about. For Ashdown, it comes down to an even narrower conjunction, between electoral reform and the mind of Tony Blair. There will be a report, and then a referendum. It is what the Lib Dems are living for, but it does not give unchallenged grounds for optimism.

From Blair, the reform question demands a delicate but definitive judgment. Though studiously sceptical

in public so far, he can hardly wait to come down as an anti-reformer. Yet, as I have argued before, asking the voters to throw out a system that produced, in 1997, a result they apparently remain proud of is an unsettling suggestion. For a popular leader to cast doubt on his own legitimacy may have unpredictable effects on the electorate. Only when people are discontented with politics, perhaps, can they be goaded into changing the rules. And they are not now discontented. Irrespective of what Blair might think about voting systems, he faces the serious risk of losing a referendum: a risk he might prefer not to run.

For Ashdown, the risk is twice that. For a referendum to be held without Blair's support would signal the end of the collaborative project. There are plenty of Lib Dems, including Lib Dem MPs, who would regard such a Blair performance as total treachery, and would look forward to strangling the Ashdown project there and then.

Equally calamitous, though, for Ashdown as well as Blair, would be a No majority. That, too, would end the Grimondite dream.

This is the level of the stakes. So what might make them worth risking? For Ashdown, the opportunity Blair then creates to do what he really wants: take revenge on the aberrant Tory ascendancy of the 20th century, and create the pluralist politics that will guarantee its opposite in the 21st. Even a modest form of proportional representation would change the shape of politics for ever. This, says the optimist, appeals equally to Blair the reformer and Blair the big-picture strategist, the supposed devilder, the believing pluralist. And

there will not be an opportunity to match the moment for a referendum in 1999.

It is an appealing prospect. But how can it be made sufficiently believable? How can Blair cash in his popularity, rather than see it debarring him from the result he wants? Only, it seems, by linking what happened in May 1997 to what must happen next. Electoral reform would have to be presented as the natural culmination of 1997: the completion of modernity; the removal of power from a rigged establishment anachronism with dubious democratic credentials, and its returning to the people.

THERE are problems with this message, beginning with the fact that New Labour has never yet tried to put it across. It involves an explicit recognition of the merits of Lib-Lab pluralism which Ashdown, and more mutedly, Blair are almost alone in daring enthusiastically to embrace. There will be many cities, in the 1999 local elections, where the two parties are at each other's throats, the Tories having already been obliterated. Proposing an electoral revolution is work which, at every level from ward to nation, would appear to require a crusade that has not even begun.

Getting it across, moreover, is likely to have more to do with politics than with the higher democratic virtues. To be gathered successfully into the Blair project, PR will need to be presented rather openly as a way of entrenching the progressive majority in power in the 21st century. Though decorated with genuine arguments about fairness, representativeness, and the value of coalitions, the core case will be political: throttle

for ever the chances of a hard-line (Thatcherite) party coming to power on a minority vote. One consequence of this, however, will be to hand most of the fairness case to the beleaguered Tories. Even though the Conservatives, arguably, need PR a lot more than Labour, it will be untied in atavistic opposition: a galvanising opportunity Blair might be glad not to hand to his main enemy.

How to respond to Jenkins, whatever Jenkins says, is a big decision. It's as big as any decision the leader will have to take. I say leader advisedly. Few in his government have any idea why he is doing any of this stuff. His grasp of the bigness of the picture is unique to him. If, despite many tempting reasons to do otherwise, he drives hard for a Yes vote in the referendum he must postpone, he'll be showing a commitment to new politics for which there is no case to be found in short-term necessities. He will gamble party unity and his own invincibility on a very large outcome.

If, on the other hand, he backs off, it will be the end of the most distinctive experiment latent in the wings of Blairism. Majoritarian politics will be locked back in. It will also be the end of Paddy Ashdown. He's been amazingly successful in guiding the Lib Dems to a central role on big questions. He used his 10th anniversary speech last night to signal the mother-and-father of policy debates at this year's party conference, when he will seek approval for a series of re-directions away from traditional Lib Dem localism towards a more national profile. Big stuff. Preparing for coalition office. But if Blair jumps the wrong way, Ashdown will be buried.

Who is being protected from whom? It's hard for gay kids to be confident about themselves with so much bigotry flying around, or to protect themselves from truly dangerous situations.

Especially if friends, parents and teachers are persuaded of how awful gay sexuality is. How can we face this highly effective onslaught

Listening is for losers

Roy Hattersley



POLITICAL parties in despair in much the same way. Labour "listened" in 1998 and now the Tory party are doing much the same — not just taking note of what the people say they want and responding to their wishes, but ostentatiously touring the country with its collective head cocked on one side like an attentive bulldog.

William Hague really wanted to tailor-make his policies to public opinion he would behave like the government and get his own version of Philip Gould to put every proposal in a focus group. New Conservatives could follow New Labour, New Sun! and New Day. The Tories want to be noted as listening. The posture is intended to illustrate Ann Widdecombe's moderation, Michael Howard's humility and John Redwood's open mind.

It is possible that the Tory listening posts have been packed with typical party activists, men and women too bone-headed to ask anything except "When do we stand up and give the leader his ovation?" But if the audiences are real cross-sections of thinking England, I would bet my substantial weight in single European currency that the participants would come in two categories.

One will refuse to express opinions, believing that politicians are paid to tell the people how they will improve society. The other will demand immediate harnessing of a hobby horse that they have ridden for years.

We launched Labour Listening in the autumn of 1998. The first session was held at a Brighton hotel with the sea so high and the wind so fierce that great waves broke over the promenade and lashed against the windows. All I could think of was Key Largo — a film in which the typhoon symbolised the destruction of a defeated mob of small-time hoodlums. Fortunately, there was no vengeful Humphrey Bogart waiting to gun us down one by one. I would not claim that the assembled audience liked the visiting politicians. But they did not hate us half as much as they hated each other.

Wisely, we had not invited what politicians patronisingly call ordinary people. We had assumed that any unattached individuals who attended would (assuming they were not sheltering from the rain) be ordinary to the point of madness. So we assembled what we believed to be representatives of key organisations. The spokesman for animal rights demanded the

prohibition of circuses. The delegates from the field sports societies complained about the threat to hunting. Ex-servicemen called for a bigger standing army and several new aircraft carriers. Pacifists argued for a reduction in the defence budget. All they agreed about was the need for higher public expenditure and lower taxes.

There would have been no point in quoting Edmund Burke's famous dictum to his Bristol electors. "Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgement and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion." The electors of Brighton were absolutely clear that their opinions were all that mattered. And, if they had reposed the slightest confidence in our judgment, we would not have done so spectacularly badly at the previous general election.

TO MY astonishment, there was not a single disciple of John Rawls amongst them so the notion that democratic governments have a duty to adjudicate between conflicting liberties was all that mattered. At the time, those of us who went through the experience thought that our behaviour was, at worst, no more than ridiculous. In fact, we were guilty of one of the most serious political crimes. We were campaigning under false pretences. The innocents who turned up really believed that they were helping to shape the policies of HM Opposition and might even have some influence on a future government. In fact, they were taking part

The audience hated each other. Waves lashed the windows. We lost

In a doubly cynical exercise, Labour was attempting simultaneously to appear responsive to new ideas whilst getting the names of its old leaders into the papers. And that is exactly what William Hague will be doing as he tours the country, and the result will be the same as it was for us. He will lose the next general election. What if the chance he has of winning requires him to abandon silly stunts and sit down with a few cerebral members of the shadow cabinet and work out some sensible policies to offer the electorate. Those policies should be based on a consistent and coherent ideological principle which, for the sake of argument, we will call modern conservatism. The idea of meetings with the public can contribute to that is all part of a fantasy — of a party leader who has to think of how to pass the time between now and the next defeat.

Gay kids haven't much of a hope, it seems, while the Lords cling to their power

Out the Peers

Jonathan Keane



THE last-minute attempts to derail the bill cutting the age of gay consent to 16 make it clear that a substantial alliance of opinion formers and right wing politicians will never accept the advance of gay equality.

This cast of diehards — worthy of a political blockbuster — includes the formidable presences of the George Carey, Archbishop

of Canterbury and former Tory leader of the Lords, Baroness Young, supported by choruses of disapproval from those irrefutably sensible organs the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph.

Baroness Young, who has a 16-year-old grandson herself, believes that 16-year-old boys "can go through a phase of perhaps hero worship, liking an older man, and then come out of it".

She's quite right of course, although it isn't always a man that schoolboys go a little dewy eyed over. I fell hopelessly in love with my music teacher Miss Salt. It's lucky I wasn't inducted into the rather confused and prejudiced world of heterosexuality, instead of becoming the well-adjusted homosexual I am now.

At the time of the Commons vote last month, the principal campaigner against its passage was

Anne Widdecombe. Her line of attack was to raise fears of a gay conspiracy taking hold of the government.

Now, to varying degrees Archbishop Carey, Lady Young and newspaper editorials all stress that if the bill is passed, boys of 16 will be vulnerable to the

advances of older men — "the floodgates will be open" as the Baroness calmly put it. Moreover, says the Mail, those lobbying for the bill are a "minority of homosexuals" who would gain the legal right to "induct into their

world boys uncertain about their own still developing sexuality". In short, gay men were conflated with paedophiles and young men stereotyped as pathological victims.

Because the Commons supported this bill into what the Archbishop called a morally unhealthy society it is, it seems, the Lords who "can prove a model of how to care for the young". There is nothing, sensible about what these people are saying. When the gay community achieved the "Sixteen" vote, there was no lascivious jollification. No sudden declarations of "Yes we can have sex with adolescent boys". (Gay teenagers do not on the whole hold with sleep with wrinkly old gay men).

For many people of my 28 years and above, the successful Commons vote came as justification (too late) of who we are. It is the mem-



of stupidity and nonsense? When an unelected chamber has the support of the majority of the printed press and retains the power to throw out a government bill, what chance has a minority social group in fighting for equal status?

If the breath of social fairness is to regenerate this country the Lords cannot continue to dominate debate in this way. Even their points of reference are antiquated (Baroness Young talks of sexual development as if it all takes place in a boys' public school).

Without the right of a democratically-elected government to deliver what it promises, the views of the majority of kind, fair-minded British people will remain in thrall to the prejudices of a divisive agenda.

Jonathan Keane writes for the Pink Paper

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Bromide for fat cats

Higher tax is an option

THE TIME has now come for the Government to do something about a problem that won't go away: top salaries. Ever since Labour was returned to power the Chancellor has been warning about the need to restrain wages in order to prevent the present economic recovery from being undermined by inflationary pressures. Yet company directors, who are supposed to possess powers of leadership, have cocked a snoot at the Chancellor's exhortations. As our annual survey of top salaries shows, they awarded themselves increases (excluding other incentives like stock options) of 18 per cent last year. This was over four times the increase in average earnings of 4.4 per cent — which Mr Brown feels is too high anyway. There is no evidence that the bonanza in salaries was the reward for big improvements in efficiency because Britain's productivity record at the moment is very poor. They have been awarded by remuneration committees often consisting of non-executive directors who are themselves the beneficiaries when the same system is applied to their own companies. They agree increases with reference to current market conditions which makes large increases self-fulfilling, a gravy train that could run for ever.

No one minds executives being rewarded for outstanding performance. But that is not what is happening. Directors are being awarded increases irrespective of whether they are good or bad. Nor can the increases

be justified as a reward for higher share prices. The 25 per cent increase in share prices in 1997 surprised practically everyone — including highly paid City analysts, none of whom saw it coming. It had nothing to do with increased managerial effort. And let no one pretend that this sort of behaviour doesn't affect the real world. The recent rise in average earnings is partly because the index includes high bonus payments for the better-off. More important, boardroom greed sends the wrong signal to the shop-floor. How can employees take calls for restraint seriously when their bosses have got their snouts so deep in the trough that they can't hear a word of what is being said?

It is argued that nothing can be done about top pay because of market forces and globalisation. This is not true. At the very least, the Government could compel directors awarding themselves above average increases to explain themselves in the annual report. Enlightened companies like Marks & Spencer already try to keep the same percentage rises for all. This still gives directors a huge advantage because 5 per cent of £226,000 a year (the average salary for a top director) is worth over £40,000 whereas 5 per cent of £20,000 is worth only £1,000. Better still, the Government should insist that directorial increases above the average for the firm have to be voted on first by the shareholders before being paid out. If this doesn't work the Government should consider raising the top rate of tax. In the 1970s it was generally agreed that the top rate of income tax (at 83 per cent) was grossly unfair (though it didn't seem to affect economic growth adversely). Since then it has been reduced to 40 per cent enabling top earners to keep an extra £43,000 out of every £100,000 they earn. Far from showing any gratitude they have kept increasing their salaries year in and year out

by far more than their employees'. This is neither fair nor efficient. In opposition Labour was very vocal about fat cat pay. In government it is making impressive strides towards moulding Britain into a fairer and more efficient society. But it won't succeed if the gap between earned income at the bottom and unearned increases at the top continues to widen. If Britain's directors are unable to understand the word "restraint" then they will have to learn the hard way.

Paddy's decade

Now keep up the good work

NO ONE will mind too much if Paddy Ashdown fails to appear at his desk at seven o'clock this morning, as per his usual routine. He might well be nursing a sore head after last night's bash at the Waldorf hotel to mark his 10 years at the head of the Liberal Democratic party — and who can blame him? The faithful are bound to have been in abundant mood, cheering a leader who has taken his party from the wilderness years of the SLD — hardly salad days — to the high watermark of May 1997, which saw the party win 46 seats and its largest Commons presence since 1935.

Mr Ashdown has earned his bragging rights, both as electoral tactician and long-term strategist. The era of the Alliance saw an attempt to replace Labour as the party of anti-Conservative opposition. In 10 years, Paddy Ashdown has moved his troops away from that doomed goal, first to the policy of "equidistance" from both main parties and then to today's strategy of "constructive opposition," by which the Lib Dems do not hide their proximity to Labour — supporting them where they agree, opposing where they disagree. He has steered these changes

without splitting his party or sparking a single challenge to his leadership, all the time boosting the Lib Dems' poll ratings and their success rate at local level. He has been an effective performer, fluent on television and human enough to survive a minor personal scandal and still enjoy wide public respect.

The main achievement of his past, however, is also the greatest dilemma of his future. Constructive opposition has brought great gains for the Liberal Democrats. Mr Ashdown can boast that the goals which were for so long Lib Dem pipe-dreams — devolution, freedom of information, changes to the House of Lords, moves toward proportional representation — are now becoming real, with his party granted a seat at the reforming table. The trouble is, as many Lib Dems grumble, all this close co-operation with the Government could swallow them up. If they agree so much with Labour, why should voters bother to back them? Moreover, if the Government loses popularity, the Lib Dems might be tainted by association. Paddy Ashdown's task now is to maintain co-operation, while retaining the Lib Dems' distinctive identity. The way to do that is to keep generating fresh ideas, like last week's call for a constitution for Europe. If he can keep that up, Paddy's next 10 years may be even more fruitful than his first.

A nip for the road

Having their cake and eating it

AMONG the old-fashioned virtues — such as walking to school — which are being revived in the transport white paper, the return of the greasy spoon may feature less prominently. But truckers were said to be

celebrating yesterday as the news of a passage in the white paper calling for improvement of "roadside facilities" for lorry drivers began to circulate. Chipped mugs of strong tea were being lifted in laybys on "A" roads throughout the country, with cries of "I wouldn't mind having that John Prescott in my cab". Or so the Road Haulage Association would have us believe yesterday, as its spokesman offered the deputy prime minister "a good square meal during the journey back up to Hull".

The problem with this particular revival is that greasy spoons are... very greasy. As the Partridge Dictionary of Slang explains succinctly, the name — first applied to US railroad eating houses in the 1930s — "derives from the state of the cutlery". If the decline of the roadside cafe is to be reversed, it will surely need to be accompanied by much higher standards.

Fortunately a model is on hand: yesterday by coincidence also saw the 90th anniversary of the first Lyons Corner House, that much-loved British institution which was shamefully driven off the high street by fast food outlets and pizza bars. Why not transfer the Corner House ethic of "good food at reasonable prices in exceptionally smart and clean surroundings" to the transport cafe? The staff — "Nippies" as they might again be called — would wear white starched aprons with a hill book attached on a black cord. They would be inspected every morning to make sure that the seams in their stockings were straight. They would learn how to slice a tomato into nine equal slices. No bread roll would ever be more than one hour old — and the cutlery would always be clean. The only remaining question is whether lorry-drivers today would go for the Battenburg Cake or the Viennese Whirl — and would they always remember to use the sugar-tongs?

Letters to the Editor

The other side of the story

THE Orange Order does not deserve to be held responsible for the actions of the brutal killers of the three young Quinn brothers in Belfast. The Irish people as a whole should be held accountable for the dastardly deeds of Sinn Féin/IRA over the past 30 years. The vast majority of Orangemen abhor these horrific murders, just as much as anyone else.

Brian M Maxwell,
Leader of Portsmouth Loyal Orange Lodge No. 11.

MY COUSIN Melissa Bell (Letters, July 22) is being a bit hard on her father's colleague G K Chesterton during the Taffon general election campaign. The two lines allegedly misquoted do actually appear in Chesterton's poem "The Secret People" (save for a trivial alteration of "but to that", but as the first and penultimate lines rather than consecutively. Professor Anthony King appears to have been misled on this point in his fine election study by taking the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations as his source rather than the poem itself. Oliver Kamm.

WITH all the emphasis on sex at the Lambeth conference, one is reminded of the bishop who said: "There's nothing I enjoy more than going to bed with a good Trollope".

David L Gosling,
Cambridge.

OH you metropolitan types and your open relationships (Can open relationships ever work? July 20) Real grown-ups don't have the time or energy for such frumpiness. After work, children, cooking, cleaning and shopping, all I want when I go to bed is a damn good snooze (and so does my husband).
Valerie Elson,
Whiston, Merseyside.

WILLIAM Barrett (Letters, July 21) may not wish to see Jeremy Paxman naked, but I wouldn't mind. Should I stop paying my licence fee forthwith?
Alison Collins,
Swindon.

Boardroom bashing

YOUR front page yesterday (The boardroom bonanza) looked depressingly familiar. Cadbury, Greenbury and Hampel have come and gone, with the boardroom's desire for self-regulation persistently reasserted. These arguments would have more force, and longer shelf-life, if certain boardrooms started to show less of a recidivist tendency to the area of executive pay.

Although the Chancellor has repeatedly called for pay restraint, some business leaders seem likely to test the public's patience to the limit, as well as that of the shareholders and employees.

The Government has recently launched a wide-ranging review of company law, and has not ruled out the possibility of legislation where corporate governance is still found wanting.

Businesses would be advised to take this review very seriously indeed.

Tony Morgan,
Chief executive,
The Industrial Society.

INSTEAD of moaning that they can do little about the 18 per cent executive pay rise, why can't the Government produce a league table ranking companies by the ratio of

the highest paid to the lowest paid? Such a social index, though initially crude, would at least allow the real hypothesis to be tested and create a "bottom 100 FTSE index" for ethical investors to consider. But will a government obsessed with output measures and performance-related pay be prepared to set target ratios for their business pals, as they are trying to do for schools?

Or they could really go to town and develop other performance indexes, such as the ratio of average boardroom salary — including all the "off the book" share options and other perks — to annual profits.

This is not a job for Chris Woodhead and the Government's "fair employment" legislation?
Dave Sutton,
Bristol.

NEW CBI president, Sir Clive Thompson, claims that high salaries for his directors and low pay for his workers are "good for the economy". Whether or not this is so, it is undoubtedly bad for health, since growing evidence suggests that the wider the income gap, the wider the health gap. For example, infant mortality in

social classes IV and V in the UK is twice as high as in Sweden. In America's booming economy, the gap has now reached the point where a child born in Bangladesh has a greater life expectancy than a child born in Harlem. Is this the society Sir Clive seeks to create?

THE sickening display of greed by Clive Thompson, who believes he "earns" £1.45 million while his staff earn £2.72, can be easily cured. Instead of having a minimum wage, why not have a maximum differential? It's inequality that hurts, not maximums and minimums.
Alan Perrow,
Clapham,
North Yorks.

SO Clive Thompson thinks that a minimum wage of \$3.60 an hour is too high? As Franklin D Roosevelt said in 1936: "Do not let any calamity-hoarding executive with an income of \$1,000 a day, tell you that a wage of \$11 is going to have a disastrous effect on all American industry."
Sanjiv Sachdev,
Cambridge.

Hospital stay takes the pain away

JOHN Grace writes (Day Stripper, 22 July 21) of the considerable post-operative pain that he and other patients experienced after day case surgery. This is often not mentioned in pre-operative advice and counselling.

The proponents of this kind of care can rightly demonstrate that it is efficient, speedy and safe, and often takes place in a modern, comfortable environment that may be in marked contrast to other parts of the elderly NHS. Nevertheless, research into the pain-relieving drugs commonly given to patients to take home with them after surgery has often revealed that a large proportion of patients having particular surgical procedures experience moderate or severe pain in the 24 hours after the operation.

While day case surgery may

result in shorter waiting times, I suspect that patients are rarely told that, were they to have the surgery as an inpatient, more powerful and effective pain-relieving and anti-sickness drugs would be available. If patients were given this information, it might be interesting to see how many would then insist on an admission.

An honest discussion of these problems should be part of the pre-operative advice given to patients.
Dr I Spencer,
(Consultant in anaesthetics)
Durham.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. The Country Diary is on Page 10

Morse code

THE obituary for Alec Robb, also known as Castles, (July 19) failed to reveal his role in the creation of the great fictional detectives, Inspector Morse and Sergeant Lewis. He introduced the author of the Morse books, Colin Dexter, to both Morse and Lewis. The event was a crossword dinner attended by Dexter, Jeremy Morse, later Sir Jeremy, and chairman of Lloyds Bank; and Dorothy Taylor, who compiled the Observer's Everyman with Alec. Sir Jeremy was a crossword fanatic and provided the inspiration for the inspector, while Dorothy Taylor provided Lewis. She had used the name as an alias so she could secretly carry on entering Observer crosswords after she became a compiler.

Anthony Quinn,
Watford.

has shown he is on message, and we can expect the Lords to play a bigger role in curbing offshore abuses.
Andrew Hinxley,
Law lecturer,
University of London.

THE appointment of non-lawyers to the law lords is not Lord Irvine's only change of heart. The Human Rights Bill contains a gap where the independent Human Rights Commission should be. Such a commission is vital if our protection is not to be left to the accident of individual enthusiasm or willingness to pursue cases. These words are the Lord Chancellor's own (as you reported on Tuesday).
Andrew Fiddelphatt,
Director,
Charter 88.



Putting the cart before the horse

DESPITE Hugo Young's assertion (The day of the roaming motorist, July 21), the 1989 white paper, Roads for Prosperity, did not say that "roads should expand infinitely to fit the cars whose drivers desired to use them".

It did not apply to urban roads, but proposed a measured investment programme to modernise the main inter-urban road system as most other industrial countries had done. This was not "insane" but common sense, as the failure to invest since has shown. The resulting congestion adds to costs, pollution and global warming.

Public transport needs to be improved too, but at least this will maintain its market share which has been falling. Road users should pay the full costs of their journeys — but they already pay £30 billion in taxes compared with some 26 billion spent on roads. By reducing congestion, new roads would "generate" some extra traffic but this amounts to saying that inadequate roads suppress trips which people need or want to make. The latest White Paper appears to do little or nothing to address this major problem of inter-urban transport.
Sir Alan Bailey,
London.

A male view

LINDA Grant (Honestly, I don't hate them, but why are men like that? July 21) would understand men better if she were to accept that they are just like women in most cases.

Men do call — sometimes. If they don't, why can there not be a whole range of reasons, including the fact that they are probably scared to do so? And why is it against etiquette (as it is the 90s?) for women to call men?

Have men got only one thing on their minds? Surely it is quite possible for a man to fancy a woman and not proposition her? This is what happens in most cases. Can't Linda have a friendship that is not based on sex? Men know what they feel, but they may not want to express it, or may not express it in a way that women would approve. Women ask what you feel, then tell you that you are wrong and that you are feeling something else that fits the stereotyped ideas. Linda asks how can men be so stupid, but also answers her

own question. Women are just as stupid. Why should men be less so?

Linda brings a stereotyped approach to this: men are such and such, women are something other, and better. I'm probably a sad over-the-hill sexist pig, but I love women, and would probably like Linda as a friend if she didn't scare me sh!tless.
Chris Wiggall (Male,
I'm afraid),
Tonbridge.

CHILDREN's health and independence is being seriously impaired because of our society's car addiction. Three out of four children were accompanied to school by their parents and 6 per cent travelled alone. Fear of strangers was the main reason cited by parents for choosing their child to travel alone. But 50 times as many children are killed on the roads than are murdered by a stranger.

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Dr Jonathan McCormick,
Senior house officer in Paediatrics,
Dr Tony Waterston,
Consultant paediatrician,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

Pale blue

SINCE Norman Fowler made reference (Best in blue, July 21) to his erstwhile directorship with Group 4, it is perhaps right that we should place on record this company's belief that the private sector can work with the police, even for the police, but can never replace them. We can help with crime prevention and improvements in safety, but law enforcement is a matter for the police alone.
J Philip-Sorensen,
Chief executive,
Group 4 Securitas Ltd.

Means-test will not remedy poverty among pensioners

IT IS difficult to understand why the Government is following one strategy in developing health and education, and another in developing pensions.

The principle of free access to health care has been enlarged and free eye tests for the elderly, for example, have been restored. But it highlights the different ethic behind the policies on the NHS and pensions, as eligibility for free eye tests will depend only on age, not on income.

The Government proposes less means-testing in the NHS, but more means-testing for pensions. Instead of higher pensions by right, fulfilling the manifesto pledge that pensioners should get a fair share of rising prosperity, the Government offers the poorest a modest increase in means-tested income support, disguised as a "minimum income guarantee". This will perpetuate the high administrative costs and the disincentive to

savings which characterise all means-tested benefits.

It is a mystery why the Chancellor ignores popular and successful social insurance. Thoroughly modernised, it can provide many people with the only opportunity they will have to obtain minimally adequate pensions on their retirement, and create a contract between the generations, restoring the earnings link for existing and future pensioners.

We welcome the Government's commitment to higher speeding on health and education. But successful public services also depend on adequate pensions (and other benefits). The two have to be brought together in the new three-year speeding programme. Poverty is incompatible with either good education or good health. Barbara Castle,
House of Lords,
Peter Townsend,
University of Bristol.

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Millett judged and found wanted

YOUR front-page splash (Secret men of justice, July 18) on the newly appointed law lords reminds us of Labour's U-turn on setting up a Judicial Appointments Commission, but your legal correspondent misses the significance of the promotion of Millett. I. J. She knows only three things about Peter Millett: he is a freemason; he favours the state over the individual; These facts obscure a far more interesting story.

Freemasonry, to us outsiders, connotes secrecy and favouritism. But Millett, who makes no secret of being a mason, is the least secretive of our judges. In the last three

years, he has published five long articles in law journals explaining his recent decisions and expounding his policy for the future. As a result, his social and moral views are a matter of public record. Before becoming a chancery judge, Millett was a chancery commercial lawyer. Chancery, since the days of Henry VIII, has been the only English court which listens to moral arguments. Millett views the world of commerce through moral spectacles. Before becoming a judge, he was involved in the 1970s moral crusade against Rossminster-style tax avoidance. Since becoming a judge, he has rid the City of its most blatant money-launderers and is at present campaigning against the sham offshore trusts which are their favourite tool.

Thirdly, whenever the state moves against them, money-launderers and tax evaders complain that their human rights have been abused. The only way that cocaine and uranium smugglers, transistors and inside-trader can claim public sympathy is by asserting their human right to financial secrecy. When tackling immorality in the global markets, the important polarity is between offshore and onshore. Blair and Brown are anxious to bring the City back onshore. The implications of Millett's promotion are that Lord Irvine

Analysis Rugby in the red

Clubs in a cash ruck

Professionalism brought rich owners into the sport, yet some of the top clubs in England and Wales are going bankrupt. The clubs that pay the players call the tune and the national sides suffer drastic defeats. **Ian Malin** asks what's gone wrong with our once great game

COULD anywhere have been more appropriate for the clash between the new and the old worlds of rugby union than Rugby, the Midlands town where in 1823 "with a fine disregard for the rules" 16-year-old William Webb Ellis first picked up a football and ran with it.

But five summers ago Webb Ellis Road almost became a graveyard for Rugby RFC. The 120-year-old club had debts of around £400,000, most the result of building a new clubhouse at a cost of £500,000. Liquidators were called in and Dudley Wood, secretary of the English Rugby Football Union (RFU), pronounced the financial mess the worst he had seen. Twickenham (the RFU's headquarters) put its hand in its pocket to bail out the game's prodigal son. Rugby was lent £500,000 and the RFU arranged to lease the white elephant of a clubhouse to a newly-formed club, since called Rugby Lions. Only five years ago, but these were still the old amateur days and Twickenham looked after its own. The RFU was not going to allow the town of Rugby to disappear from the map.

But three years ago rugby union became "open". Professionalism may have been inevitable, but not the way it has been handled. The travails of the club in Rugby pale as the sport rings with crashing sounds. Twickenham is no longer able to heave a sigh and shell out to help its ailing kin through another season. Something has gone badly wrong: professionalism has been mismanaged. English clubs, those in Wales, too, are paying large salaries to their players but not attracting enough supporters through the turnstiles and into the clubhouses. The result is financial crisis. Yet the clubs going crash are not the Old Ruggerdians or the Biggleswade Vikings. Ninety-five per cent of rugby union clubs in England and Wales remain effectively amateur. They make the along content if they have enough cash to buy a new set of shirts every season and enough beer to inspire a few choruses

of Eshmeo Neil on a Saturday night. The problem is largely confined to the leading clubs. But it is those which during the century past have provided the host of players good enough to wear an England shirt. In this way it has become a national crisis.

Take Moseley in Birmingham. The club went into administration earlier this year with debts of over £1 million. A tradition dies at century's end: Moseley's Reddings ground is to be sold to Bryant Homes. A few miles away another second division club with a glorious past, Coventry is also in desperate trouble. This club happens to have a benefactor in the businessman Gerry Sugrue but so far its attempts to buy success have been a disaster. Its debts also approach £1 million, and Coventry has been riven with dissent. The club's ageing membership objects to Mr Sugrue's plans to leave its rundown but much-loved home at Compton Road. Where Coventry will go, though, is a bit of a mystery.

Next season Moseley and Coventry will be joined in the second division, now portentously called Allied Dunbar Premiership Two, by Bristol RFC, another great club of the past. This week Arthur Holmes, the millionaire insurance broker whose loan has helped Bristol stagger through two years of professionalism, said the club would go out of business unless its players accepted pay-outs of 30 per cent. "Someone has to come along and share the load otherwise the club will close down," he warned. "Unfortunately Bristol is a salesman's graveyard but I can see a dozen or so clubs going out of business because the wages are ridiculous."

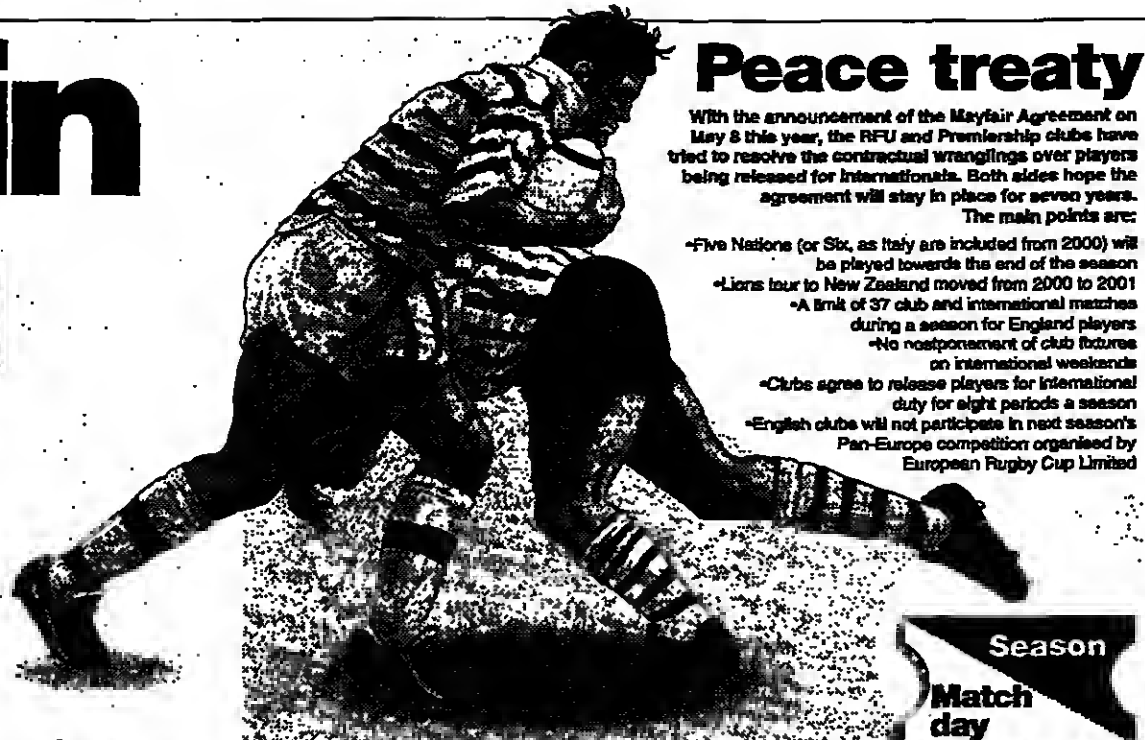
On the other side of Offa's Dyke things are worse. In 15 months' time Wales will host rugby's world cup. In preparation, the Millennium Stadium is arising from the building site that was the Cardiff Arms Park. The Welsh Rugby Union is generating good money through sponsorship for European Cup competition from Heineken, through a television contract for S4C channel and through internationals.

It is again the clubs which are in a perilous state. Neath, founded in 1871, is the oldest first-class club in Wales. Or was. The club has gone bankrupt and folded, its players unpaid since the end of last season. Neath was once disparaged by the visiting Australian coach Bob Dwyer as "the bog-snatching capital of the world" — he was referring to the men in black grabbing the testicles of his players in scrums. Now it is Neath's bank manager who is putting on the squeeze. It owes £200,000 after a season in which it finished fifth in Wales's Premier Division; it has no assets and its ground, the Gnoll, is owned by the local authority. However, next month, like Rugby Lions, it is supposed to emerge as a new club, tentatively named Neath.

THE clubs flounder. No blue chip companies, let alone breweries, seem willing to pay to support Wales's national game at club level and the Welsh Rugby Union has had to hire the sports management company IMG to look for a sponsor for the Premier Division. Yet the same WRU is prepared to part with £1.25 million for the services of a coach, New Zealander Graham Henry, to try to improve Wales's wretched results in the last decade.

In England professionalism has been a very painful transition indeed. In the southern hemisphere professional status for players was embraced with enthusiasm: in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand they were put under contracts by their national unions. For rugby's superpowers, pulling on the national jersey means everything. In England, by contrast, rugby union has for years been a recreational game of the middle-classes, learned on the playing fields of public and grammar schools and played in clubs. The transition has been tortuous.

Cliff Brittle would have approved of Twickenham's gesture to Rugby's rugby club five years ago. Brittle was, until this week, chairman of



Peace treaty

With the announcement of the Mayfair Agreement on May 5 this year, the RFU and Premiership clubs have tried to resolve the contractual wranglings over players being released for internationals. Both sides hope the agreement will stay in place for seven years.

The main points are:

- Five Nations (or Six, as Italy are included from 2000) will be played towards the end of the season
- Lions tour to New Zealand moved from 2000 to 2001
- A limit of 37 club and international matches during a season for England players
- No postponement of club fixtures on international weekends
- Clubs agree to release players for international duty for eight periods a season
- English clubs will not participate in next season's Pan-European competition organised by European Rugby Cup Limited

Season
Match day

Club	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
England	5,762	7,282	130-310
Wales	3,667	3,605	140-140
Scotland	4,697	7,588	25-12
Ireland	4,076	5,903	25-235
France	10,412	12,859	25-14
Italy	2,854	3,718	25-14
South Africa	2,528	5,023	25-14
Argentina	6,083	6,515	25-14
Japan	2,495	3,611	25-14
USA	2,848	3,618	25-17
Canada	3,370	9,303	25-20
Wales	6,547	5,834	25-16
Total Attendance	560,514	823,448	

the RFU's management board, the most powerful administrator of the game in England. Like the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board Lord MacLaurin, who believes there is a link between players from "village green and Test arena" Brittle believes in rugby from the grassroots upwards, a broad church in which everyone is singing from the same hymn-sheet.

When rugby went professional three years ago, Twickenham imposed a moratorium on paying players for a season while the implications of the end of amateurism were worked on. The owners of the club, many new to the game, were not prepared to hang about for Twickenham to report. Here was the bullish Sir John Hall, the North Eastern tycoon and chairman of Newcastle United FC. He took over the ailing Newcastle-Gosforth club, changing its name to Newcastle Falcons. Following him the new owners began intensive recruitment drives.

These owners were a new breed. Nigel Wray at Saracens, Richmond's Ashley Levett, Bath's Andrew Brownwood and the Arrows' grand prize racing boss Tim Walkinslow at Gloucester. For their clubs they signed up some of the world's top players. South Africa's World Cup captain Francois Pienaar, the Australian fly-half Michael Lynagh and France's captain Philippe Saint-André, all adding a dash of the exotic to the once cosy world of the English domestic game. The club owners wanted to drive the game forwards by organising their own competitions and television deals.

BUT then came Cliff Brittle, a millionaire tax exile in the Isle of Man, who emerged in the autumn of 1995, a rugby backwoodsman with a mission to fight off the new entrepreneurs and protect the beloved game. Brittle's two-and-a-half year reign at the RFU was rancorous. Last summer he held off a challenge to his chairmanship by Sussex solicitor Bob Rogers; last Sunday Brian Balster, a 56-year-old former deputy constable of Cheshire, defeated Brittle at the RFU annual general meeting by 520 votes to 345.

The two years' meetings could not have been more different. In London in 1997 the Elton Hotel had a surreal air. One of the delegates complained about the price of a pint of beer in the hotel bar while Will Carling arrived on the back of a motor-bike to speak up passionately against Brittle. More tellingly, last year the British Isles (the Lions) had just arrived home from a triumphant tour of South Africa where, against all predictions, they had defeated the world champions 2-1 in a Test series. This

summer the national sides of England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland have just returned from tours of the southern hemisphere and in all nine Tests

weakened sides had all been beaten, mostly by huge margins. England lost 75-0 defeat to Australia. Wales were one try away from conceding a century to the Springboks.

The British and Irish teams were all missing star players because in the northern hemisphere the players are contracted to the clubs and the past season has been bruising: representation of country takes second place. An attempt was made in the spring to bridge the gap between club and country. This so-called Mayfair Agreement, between Twickenham and the clubs, is partly designed to end the conflict. Players, it decrees, should not play more than 37 club games a season.

ANOTHER major player has joined the field, Rupert Murdoch. Last summer's tour by the Lions was shown exclusively on Sky TV, the result of a deal done on the eve of the 1995 World Cup final in South Africa which gave Murdoch exclusive rights to all international rugby in the southern hemisphere. The following year a deal between the English RFU and Sky led to a conflict between England and the national bodies for Scotland, Ireland and Wales, which almost killed off the game's oldest tournament, the Five Nations Championship, the show window of rugby in Europe for a century.

Brittle had opposed the deal in which Sky had offered Twickenham £87.5 million for the right to show England's home games. The other national bodies were incensed, claiming the television rights to their games were not Twickenham's to sell. The cost of a peace deal with them and England's readmission to the Five Nations eventually cost Twickenham £50 million over five years. British rugby survived but the RFU's finances, still recovering from the cost of rebuilding the stadium at Twickenham remain shaky.

The RFU's new chairman, Brian Balster, has been making promises... an end to the rancour, no more disastrous tours to the southern hemisphere, a structure for the season that will allow both clubs and national teams to prosper. Today the Twickenham management board meets for the first time under his leadership. But it would be optimistic to think he could stop the constant struggle between wealthy men in suits. Already this week Sir John Hall and Nigel Wray have threatened to sell up if there is no progress made in establishing a new European competition for next season. The club owners are suspicious of what is on offer, the officially sanctioned pan-European competition controlled by European Rugby Cup Limited.

Meanwhile, South Africa and New Zealand are preparing for their fixture in Wellington this weekend. The two countries competed in the last World Cup final. The action in Wellington, a game to be shown exclusively on Sky, will be light years away from anything seen on these shores. Rugby owners and administrators will continue to lock horns in offices while the real spoils of a great game will be fought for on the other side of the globe, on the pitch.

Graphics sources: Rugby World Aug 1998; Division One clubs: RFU; Graphics: Michael Agar; Graphic News; Research: Matthew Keating; Ian Malin is a Guardian rugby writer.



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Promised land... Justin Rose, who earned £125 for turning up and £500 for his professional efforts, leads his team to victory in the Dutch Open pro-am yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL SEVERN

Rose steps smoothly from amateur to pro

David Davies in Hilversum sees the 17-year-old carry on as he left off at Royal Birkdale

JUSTIN ROSE started as he had finished and, presumably, how he means to go on. After birdieing his last hole as an amateur, by pitching in from 50 yards at the Open Championship at Royal Birkdale on Sunday he birdied his first competitive hole as a professional in yesterday's pro-am at the Dutch Open here.

He slid home a 15-footer for a two and, thus inspired, captained his pro-am team to victory with the vaguely indecent team score of 58, 13 under par. And, if further evidence is needed that the force is with him at the moment, his team won on a countback from a

team led by the Ryder Cup player Bernhard Langer. Rose earned £125 for turning up and £500 for his professional efforts and confessed that he would now need to open a bank account in which to deposit such riches. "It feels nice to win some money," he said. "It's very satisfying. It's money earned by going to work."

Rose's first day as a professional was a maelstrom of off-course activities, handled superbly by the 17-year-old himself and with rather less assistance by the man appointed to "supervise and support" him, Mike Todd of Carnegie Sports International.

The centre-piece was supposed to be a press conference at which the people who will be writing about his career could get to know him, and he, a little better. It turned out to be an undignified shouting match, at which television camera crews and photographers jostled for space, and Todd himself evaded questions about money.

Rose rose effortlessly above all this. The youngster, who finished fourth in the Open, confessed to enjoying the fuss, right down to laughing with eight photographers who surrounded a startled barber to get pictures of him having his hair cut.

He also fielded the grenade questions with aplomb. Did all the interest amount to "Rosemania" just like "Flanagania"? He was asked if he was a line: "I can be bigger than Tim, roars Justin".

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," he smiled. "But the press coverage has been phenomenal and I look upon that as support." He was asked if he saw himself as a kind of English Tiger Woods. Potential headline: "I can be bigger than Tiger, roars Justin".

He was asked what his expectations were this week. When Woods turned professional he said he expected to win every time he entered an event. Potential headline: "I can beat these old hickies, roars Justin". Instead he admitted: "Last week may have taken a lot out of me. I hope to make the cut and progress from there."

He was not quite so coy about the recent past or the future. "I've enjoyed my amateur career, and the way it ended was the way I'd have written it in a perfect fairy-tale story. Now my objective is to establish myself on the European Tour. The key thing is to make cuts because, if you don't do that, you don't make any money or get any points."

The reference to points was revealing. Rose has only seven possible European Tour events in which to make enough money to avoid having to go to the qualifying school and get a tour card. He needs invitations to play in all those events and at the moment has only three, but he is already thinking in terms of points, which means he is thinking in terms of making the Ryder Cup team.

"Team golf is what I really enjoyed in amateur golf," said Rose, who was Great Britain and Ireland's best player in his only Walker Cup, at Quaker Ridge last year, when he got two points out of four. "The Ryder Cup is a top priority. It would be unbelievable."

He was asked what he thought he might have achieved in 10 years' time, a question once asked of the then 16-year-old Sandy Lyle, who replied that he thought he might have won an Open. He missed by a year. Rose is slightly more ambitious. "I think I'd like to have a couple of majors by that time."

Might not the hype affect him? "No," he said firmly. "I've got to go out and play golf, focused golf, and nothing is going to get in the way of my doing that."

Rugby League Sacked coach looks to court

Andy Wilson

GARRY SCHOFIELD yesterday informed Huddersfield that he would not be playing against Hull tomorrow and that he was taking legal action against them.

Schofield was stood down as Huddersfield's coach on Monday because the club claimed to have discovered that he did not possess the necessary Level III coaching qualifications. But Schofield's solicitor Paul Scholey said yesterday: "It now seems no such requirement arises until October 1999."

Huddersfield had issued a statement saying that Schofield remained "100 per cent committed" to them, and he was named as a substitute for the Super League Roadshow fixture against Hull at Gateshead. But yesterday Schofield issued his own statement:

"The actions of the club leave me with no alternative. I can't believe that the club would ask me to play for them now." Schofield joined Huddersfield from Leeds as a player in a £130,000 deal in 1996 and was appointed player-coach last November following Huddersfield's promotion to Super League in place of Paris. But Huddersfield have only two wins from 12 matches this season.

Schofield remains contracted to Huddersfield until 2000, when he will be 35, so this could mark the end of his distinguished playing career. Phil Veivers, appointed as Schofield's assistant last November, remains charge of the team for tomorrow's match.

Veivers, meanwhile, was one of four Australians selected in the Scotland squad under the grandparent rule for this November's international matches against Ireland and France. Veivers, his Huddersfield team-mate Denny Russell, Terry Matterson of the London Broncos and Sheffield's Darren Shaw will be joined by three New Zealanders and Jamie Bloom, a South African.

SCOTLAND SQUAD: Barry, Mait, Veivers, Russell, Arnold, Orr (all Huddersfield), Rennie, Duff, Wainwright (all Warrington), Mogg, Campbell, Smith (all Hull), Matterson (both London), I. Hughes (London, on loan to Hull), Langston, P. Shaw (both Sheffield), G. Shaw (Bradford), Flowers (Cardiff), Sweeney, Llanesha, Lym, G. Shaw (Oldham), Bloom (Hull), Hewitt (Leeds).

Goodwill Games Edwards sets year's best

JONATHAN EDWARDS set the longest mark of the year in winning the triple jump in New York.

The world record holder from Gateshead recorded 17.55m on his final jump despite a punishing schedule which saw him compete in Britain on Sunday and fly out the following day.

Maurice Greene of the United States led from the start to win a highly charged 100m in 9.95sec. Ato Boldon finished second, giving both the satisfaction of beating Donovan Bailey after derogatory remarks attributed to the Canadian.

Michael Johnson ran the fastest 400m of the year, 43.76, to suggest his leg injuries are behind him. But the three-times world steeplechase champion Moses Kiptanui will be out for the rest of the year after rupturing an Achilles tendon.

The Chinese gymnast Sang Lan was left paralysed from the chest down after fracturing two vertebrae in her back after a fall during her warm-up for the vault competition. The 17-year-old lost her bearings in mid-air and landed on her head on the mat.

County Cricket

Gloucestershire v Surrey

Hollioake remembers the recipe

Paul Weaver at Cheltenham

ADAM HOLLIOAKE would have been forgiven if he had offered a wan little smile and disappeared as mysteriously as Lord Lucan, or perhaps plied his flannels on some bench at a John Stonehouse.

It has not been a good year for the older of the Hollioakes; come to that, Ben is not having a hot time either. Since the brothers made their Test debuts against Australia last summer, Adam has seen his form collapse and his chirpy confidence has grown brittle with repeated failure.

He has lost his Test place and seen even his county

form desert him. At the weekend he also lost the captaincy of England's one-day side after a string of failures and saw his place in the team become the subject of debate.

His fortunes appear to be turning. Against Middlesex last week he scored 59, equaling his highest score of the season, and yesterday came the long-awaited hundred as Surrey compiled 256 for six against fourth-placed Gloucestershire in a day abridged to 64 overs because of rain.

Having won the toss and chosen to bat after a little hesitation, Hollioake needed to lead by example after seeing his championship leaders slide to 109 for four on a true

pitch. Ian Ward was caught behind off Mike Smith from the ninth ball of the morning and Hollioake came in at 44 for two after Naseem Shahid was lured playing across the line.

It got worse. Jason Ratcliffe, who had batted with skillful assurance for 38, was caught by Jonathan Lewis at long-leg off Courtney Walsh and Alistair Brown, who had struck five fours in an 18-ball 22, fell to the same combination to leave Surrey in some trouble. They were soon 138 for five when Ben Hollioake was well caught at slip by Martyn Ball.

Hollioake and James Knott then added 115 for the sixth wicket. Knott made a determined 55, his highest score in

14 championship innings going back to last year, before he was caught behind from a rare loose shot.

Hollioake, who gave a difficult chance to Robert Cullifield at third slip at 23, drove with immense power, both over the top and along the ground, and reached his century from 142 deliveries, with 18 fours and a six.

"It was nice to get out on a good, bouncy wicket," Hollioake said. "My form has been coming back but with our batting it has been difficult to get to the crease sometimes."

"As for the one-day captaincy thing, I could see it coming. But I have always said that the captaincy is not a major ambition of mine."

Scoreboard

Britannia Assurance County Championship

(First day today 11.0)

GLoucestershire v Lancashire
Gloucestershire (1st) have scored 256 for the loss of four first-innings wickets against Lancashire (1).

First innings
P. Cullifield 100, I. Ward 50, J. Ratcliffe 38, A. Brown 22, M. Ball 18, N. Shahid 14, J. Lewis 11, J. Knott 55, J. Smith 44, J. Hollioake 59, J. Ward 100, J. Ratcliffe 38, A. Brown 22, M. Ball 18, N. Shahid 14, J. Lewis 11, J. Knott 55, J. Smith 44, J. Hollioake 59.

Second day (today 11.0)
Surrey v Gloucestershire
Surrey (1st) have scored 109 for the loss of four first-innings wickets against Gloucestershire (2).

First innings
J. Knott 55, J. Smith 44, J. Hollioake 59, J. Ward 100, J. Ratcliffe 38, A. Brown 22, M. Ball 18, N. Shahid 14, J. Lewis 11, J. Knott 55, J. Smith 44, J. Hollioake 59.

Loye presses on past 1,000

MAL LOYE became the first Englishman to pass 1,000 first-class runs for the season, hitting 157 for Northamptonshire against Derbyshire at Wantage Road yesterday.

The 25-year-old shared a second-wicket stand of 296 with Roh Bailey, who hit 149 not out, and the home side were 335 for two off 92.2 overs when bad light stopped play.

The pair came together after Phil DeFreitas dismissed Richard Mounier — back after six weeks out with a broken hand — with only the fifth ball of the match. DeFreitas had waited for his next wicket, having Loye caught behind off a top-edged pull with the score on 296. Loye had hit three sixes — one of which struck a spectator on the head — and 21 fours in his 224-ball innings.

Derbyshire v Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire (1st) have scored 335 for the loss of two first-innings wickets against Derbyshire (1).

First innings
M. Loye 157, R. Bailey 149, P. DeFreitas 10, R. Mounier 10, J. Smith 10, J. Hollioake 10, J. Ward 10, J. Ratcliffe 10, A. Brown 10, M. Ball 10, N. Shahid 10, J. Lewis 10, J. Knott 10, J. Smith 10, J. Hollioake 10.

Robinson's early break

TIM ROBINSON'S first-class career ended prematurely yesterday when his left wrist was broken by Hampshire's West Indian fast bowler Nixon McLean on a day when 14 wickets fell at Farnham.

Nottinghamshire's former captain and England Test batsman, struck by the first ball he faced, had planned to retire at the end of the season but he may well have played his last match for the county since the injury is expected to take at least two months to heal.

McLean went on to take four for 45 and, with Alex Morris chipping in with three for 28, Nottinghamshire were shot out for 128 in 41.2 overs.

Glamorgan v Lancashire

Croft's unhappy return

Andy Wilson at Colwyn Bay

THERE was a time when the return of Robert Croft from Test duty would have worried Lancashire, on their last trip to Wales he took five wickets to bow Glamorgan to victory. Yesterday the news that he had been released by England and was heading west from Nottingham caused only broad Lancastrian grins.

This was less a reflection of Croft's abilities than of the implications that his return had for the new Red Rose favourite Andy Flintoff. But

he did come into this game with only eight championship wickets, the last on June 15. He added a ninth late on, having Graham Lloyd caught at long-on after Lloyd raced to his first half-century from only 41 balls. But Croft made a more eye-catching contribution during one of three stoppages for rain, taking a fishing rod from his car and giving his captain, Matthew Maynard, a lesson.

Still, the pitch is expected to help the spinners, which explained Lancashire giving a debut to Chris Schofield, a 19-year-old leg-break bowler from Littleborough.

Nathan Wood and Paddy McKewen followed their instructions to fill in for Mike Atherton, putting on 48 in 35 overs before McKewen was given lbw when well forward. Wood crafted 49 overs for 37 before mistiming a pull off Steve Watkins, and a third youngster, Mark Chilton, was beaten for pace by Darren Thomas.

But for Lancashire's experienced men, Lloyd and John Crawley, the rains flowed more freely. Crawley, fresh from a recent match-winning century against Worcestershire, continued his consistent form by cruising to 75.

Middlesex v Yorkshire

Shah drops drinks tray to follow star of youth

Robert Kitson at Lord's

ALL this talk of English Ash wonders and yet, until yesterday, barely a squeak from Owais Shah. Middlesex's precocious batting talent has been so belated that an unbeaten 96, his highest score of the season, was not so much another notch in his belt as a hastily grabbed strand of twine to cover his embarrassment.

A gruesome sequence, including two pairs and only one championship fifty cost him his place at Guildford last week. If carrying the drinks provided the spur for his watchful innings, which

lifted the home side to 278 for four, Middlesex will be tempted to start testing trays to their entire top order.

The rich form of Justin Langer, who pushed his aggregate over 1,200 with a confident 63, has not prevented heavy defeats in his side's past two championship games and, typically, this is Shah's last four-day match before he disappears to captain England Under-19 against Pakistan. Each of his 10 boundaries drove sixth-placed Yorkshire further into their shell, and Mark Ramprakash's absence had been long forgotten by the time bad light halted play 15 minutes early.

Such security looked un-

Cricket

News and Scores, Counties update

0930 16 13 ++

Derbyshire	24	Kent	30	Somerset	38
Durham	25	Lancs	31	Surrey	37
Essex	26	Leics.	32	Sussex	38
Glamorgan	27	Middlesex	33	Warwick.	39
Gloucs.	28	Northants.	34	Worcester	40
Hampshire	29	Nottingham	35	Yorkshire	41

Complete county scores 0930 16 13 23

Test Match

England v South Africa

Live Commentary 0930 16 13 21

Match Reports 0930 16 13 22

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TheGuardian INTERACTIVE

World Cup safe, say Wales, page 13

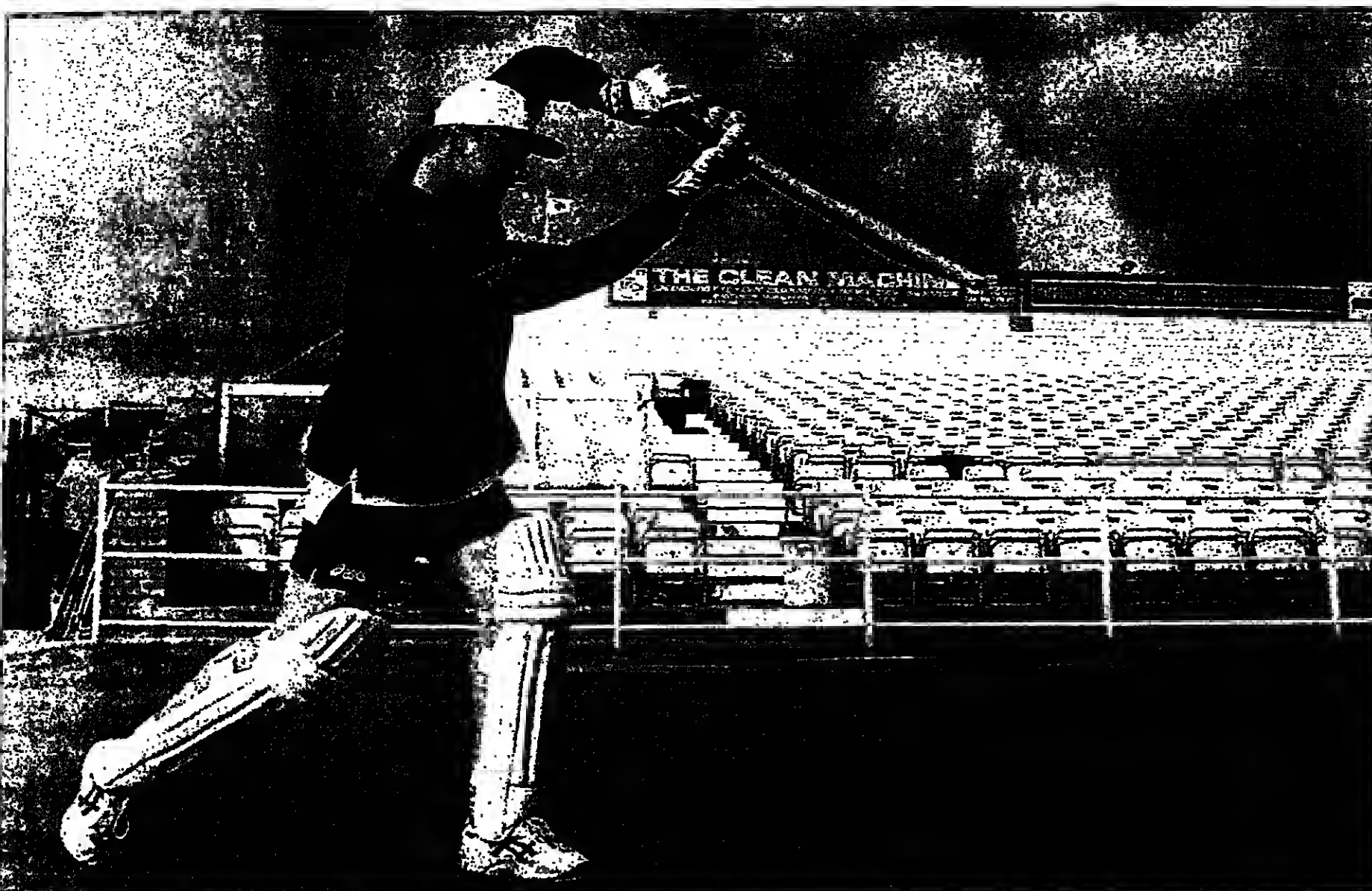
Pantani flies to victory, page 14

Rainy season causes Premiership panic, page 14

Rose opens with a win, page 15

SportsGuardian

Fourth Cornhill Test England v South Africa



Forceful entry... Lancashire's powerful 20-year-old Andrew Flintoff, on the verge of his Test debut, drives straight during net practice yesterday

Flintoff set to take centre stage

Mike Selvey on the prospect of England putting their faith in another prodigy as they attempt to stay in the series at Trent Bridge

IN WHAT might already be known as the Summer of Youth after the exuberant performances of Michael Owen and Justin Rose, England are set to give their own kid his head in the fourth Test.

Andrew Flintoff, the 20-year-old Lancastrian with the build and power of a rugby forward, will have gone to bed last night knowing that he may make his Test debut today if the selectors decide that, with his occasional medium pace, three seam bowlers augmented by Ian Salisbury's leg-spin will be enough to bowl out South Africa twice to secure a match England must win.

The decision will be made this morning after an assessment of the Trent Bridge pitch and the weather. The surface was hidden yesterday but, according to the England captain Alec Stewart, it had "a fair covering of grass". As

the off-spinner Robert Croft, wicketless in the series, is already back with Glamorgan, the choice will come down to two of Angus Fraser, Alan Mullally and Flintoff.

England have paid heavily for poor batting performances in the first innings of the last two Tests, suffering the ignominy of following on both at Lord's, where they lost heavily, and at Old Trafford, where they wriggled off the hook. One way to ensure that this does not happen again is to bowl the opposition out.

But for now it appears that Flintoff will occupy the No. 7 position giving, it is hoped, a security blanket to the top order. With Salisbury certain to be the sole front-line spinner, it is probable Mullally will be omitted with Fraser, rendered impotent by the Old Trafford pitch, still regarded both as a batsman and insurance policy against the extravagance of others.

Recently discarded all-rounders

Player	Matches	Runs	Wickets	Runs per wicket
Ben Hollister	1	30	15	2.0
Adam Hollister	4	56	10.83	5.2
Mark Ealham	5	210	21	10.0
Flintoff	2	75	25.23	3.0

Player	Matches	Runs	Wickets	Runs per wicket
Ben Hollister	9	171	17.1	10.0
Adam Hollister	9	272	24.72	11.0
Mark Ealham	9	365	26.07	13.9
Flintoff	10	542	33.87	16.0
Andrew Flintoff	9	518	43.22	11.9

Flintoff came into the squad apparently as a direct all-round replacement for Ben Hollister, who was chosen for both Lord's and Old Trafford only to be omitted on each occasion. But, according to the chairman of selectors David Graveney, a bowler has been exchanged for a batsman.

"Ben has heaps of talent," said Stewart yesterday, "and he has been bowling well. But without batting badly he has been getting out cheaply."

Another omission and another omission. It was felt, would be counter-productive. With Flintoff Stewart will be getting a confident, powerful

ful batsman who hits the ball straight off the front foot, brutally hard, but is quick on to the back foot as well. What he will not be getting is the hostile fast bowler that the teenage Flintoff was. A back injury put paid to that and he has been little more than a medium pace during his infrequent spells for Lancashire.

In effect, then, England would be attempting to win the game with four bowlers, a policy that can work well if there is help in the pitch — in which circumstances the extra batsman is a bonus — but a policy, too, which can come unstuck.

It will, however, give more support to the middle-order batsmen Mark Ramprakash and, for the first time in two years, Graeme Hick.

This is the ground on which Hick was posted into scoring a century by the then supreme Raymond Illingworth against West Indies in 1995. The hope is that the memory of that, and of scoring in dismissive fashion against Allan Donald and the belching Shaun Pollock during the washed out Test at Centurion in November the same year, will rejuvenate a Test career of under-achievement. Barring him at No. 6, where he can filter back into the system, will help.

To win, though, the bowlers, Dominic Cork in particular, must rediscover the movement and zest shown in the first two matches. Cork performed wonderfully on his return to Test cricket with 11 wickets in the first two matches, only to hit the buffers, along with Fraser, in the third. But, if the Lord's experience — when the influence of the new Grand Stand is believed to have had an effect on the way the ball swung — is anything to go by, then Cork

might gain confidence from the sight of the magnificent new Radcliffe Road stand officially opened yesterday by Sir Geoffrey Sobers.

This is the occasion, too, when Salisbury must show his worth. According to Stewart he has matured enormously as a bowler and person as a result of his winter clinics with Shane Warne's mentor Terry Jenner. Criticism of Salisbury in the past has not centred on his ability so much as his prodigality. If he has conquered that, he has an important role to play not just now but in the winter.

ENGLAND (from): M A Atherton (Lancashire), M A Butler (Sussex), M Hussell (Essex), T A A Stewart (Sussex), M A Warner (Lancashire), G A Hick (Worcestershire), A Flintoff (Lancashire), D G Cork (Durham), I D Bell (Leicestershire), G D Wright (Worcestershire), A D Mullally (Lancashire), A S C Brown (Nottinghamshire).

SOUTH AFRICA (from): G J B Labrooy (Durban), J H Kallis (Dundee), D G Coetzee (Durban), S D M Pollock, J H V M Morkel, M Ntini, A A Donald, P H Adams, P M Snyman.

County cricket, page 15

Hick ripe for return — and omens to that



Frank Keating

SIR Geoffrey Sobers, of Barbados, Nottingham and the universe, opened the spectacular new stand at Trent Bridge yesterday. More than ever the old ground is unrecognisable from the place I first entered in awe some four decades ago, although the aspect from the swish new edifice which covers the Radcliffe Road end is still of the timelessly friendly Victorian pavilion which has remained nicely unscathed by modifiers since it was opened in 1886.

Neville Cardus was particularly fond of Trent Bridge (where it was "always afternoon and 360 for two wickets") and so was John Arlott. A younger Guardian emeritus, Geoffrey Moorhouse, said it achieves "the perfect balance between a stadium and a less ambitious cricket ground where players and watchers are blended into one... above all, though, Trent Bridge is where you feel emotionally bound to the fine arts and meliorated growth of this game at its civilising best".

Not necessarily because Clive Rice was such a stalwart but any South African today will admit an affinity to Nottingham — in particular young Shaun Pollock, for the old shrine's love was garlanded in the 1995 Test by one of history's innings of ravishing grandeur when his uncle, Graeme, scored 125 off 145 balls out of a total of 180. Then Shaun's father, Peter, took 10 wickets in the match to ensure the rubber.

It seems like last Wednesday week but in fact it is 21 years almost to the day since a big, bony, broad-beamed and brazen young Englishman announced himself at Nottingham in his first Test. The selectors this morning owe it to the country to pitch in a similarly bold rookie and should they dare to give Andrew Flintoff his head, it would be terrific if he at once plonked himself four-square and centre-stage with all the shamelesschutzpah Ian Botham managed that heady afternoon in 1977.

The mind's eye still sees

Botham now, bowling his first-ball loose to Greg Chappell — and no matter it was a great, fat long-hop, it bowled the Australia captain and the exuberant young country fellow launched himself down the pitch, shirt-tails flapping, trousers drooping, molten-grin whooping, in that bull-charge which would become his signature victory salute for every one of his next 382 Test wickets.

In his next 34 balls that day Botham took four more wickets for 13 runs. Then, at tea, he met the Queen in her Jubilee Year, and later that evening he heard Chappell, rather ungraciously (but truly) muttering that he had never before got out "to such a crap ball".

"Sure it was a crap ball," replied the unabashed kid to the maestro, "but it was good enough to dispose of you."

That was the match when Geoffrey Boycott returned from skulking in his tent and scored an inevitable century after wretchedly and gormlessly running out Trent Bridge's pride and joy Derek Randall. Never can I remember a cricket crowd seething with such a palpable animosity.

IT IS a different sort of comeback morning today for another vexing enigma of the game, Graeme Hick. Omen, omen, everywhere omen: for it was at Trent Bridge that Hick scored the third of his four Test centuries and his last in England, 118 not out against West Indies in 1985 when they were without Curtly Ambrose.

After scoring three and three at Birmingham Hick had been dropped, with the chairman Raymond Illingworth mouthing through his apoplexy words which sounded as near as dammit like wet, lily-livered and spineless. But when Robin Smith's jaw was broken in the following Test at Manchester, uncharacteristically Hick went into the public press saying he was, contrary to ill's opinion, one big, tough hombre and as good as demanded the chairman restore him.

His Nottingham century was followed by 96 and 51 not out at The Oval and now it was Illingworth — oh, how we miss those catty and diverting days — going public on how his "man-management and blunt kick up the backside" had reformed the once pallid punk. To be sure, everyone thought then that Hick had turned the corner at last — until the road began to twist and turn again.

This is Britain's least successful horse. Today he looks a safe bet to notch up his 77th straight defeat

Tony Paley fails to tip Quixall Crossett, the gelding with more fan clubs than race wins

THE outspoken book-maker Barry Dennis has built up quite a following on Channel 4's Saturday racing programme The Morning Line with his Barry's Bismarcks slot, in which he has a successful record tipping well-fancied horses that he says will not win.

Today at Sedgefield even the most ignorant punter could pick out one runner not to put his hard-earned on. The trouble is, no one is

going to offer odds about Quixall Crossett not winning because he makes such a habit of it. The 13-year-old gelding has never won a race, his string of 76 defeats making him the most unsuccessful horse in British racing history.

Quixall Crossett made the title his own last week when he finished last at Wolverhampton, going past the notorious Amrullah's tally of 75 defeats. And, in today's Blackthorn Cider



Novice Chase, on any known ratings, he looks likely to stretch his lead by finishing about two fences behind the favourite Royal Barge.

Ted Caine, who trains one other horse under permit at Farnham, Beck in North Yorkshire in addition to Quixall Crossett, dismisses talk of retirement for his pride and joy.

After all, the horse has finished second twice. And, when third at Wolverhampton

in May, he would have won in another 50 yards when finishing last by his — admittedly modest — standards.

"He has a good life and loves going racing," says Caine. "He always wants to get going at the start of the race and wouldn't go if he didn't want to race."

"It's just that at halfway he starts to look after himself. To me he's a success — not many horses stay sound after so much racing. He's a

survivor in the toughest game there is."

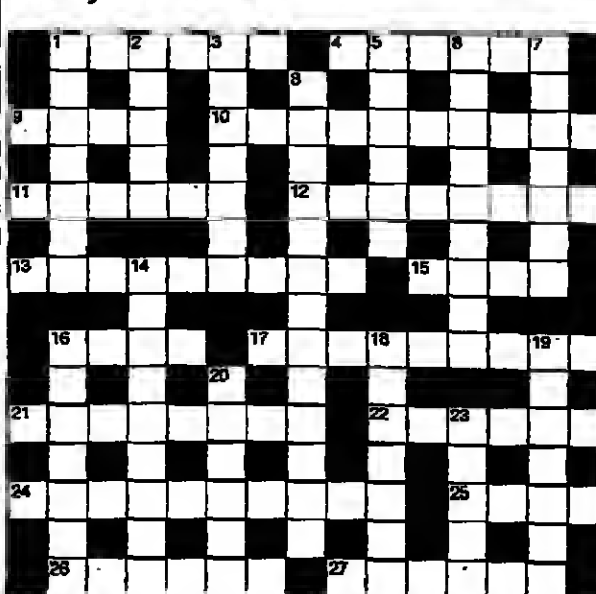
Given the fondness the British have for the underdog it is no surprise to discover that both Amrullah, now retired, and Quixall Crossett have their own fan clubs, both set up a few years ago with the foresight only hardened backers possess for spotting a loser. Both horses have got bigger cheers than the winner when eventually crossing the line in races.

But even if Quixall Crossett miraculously starts winning a sequence of races, Britain's least successful racehorse might not be able to pay his way.

The owners of Lady Rockstar, who has won eight out of 13 races for them, pointed out last week that, despite winning £24,000 in prize-money, they are still £6,000 short of paying for the training fees and other costs they have incurred since they bought her 17 months ago.

Guardian Crossword No 21,334

Set by Buntborne



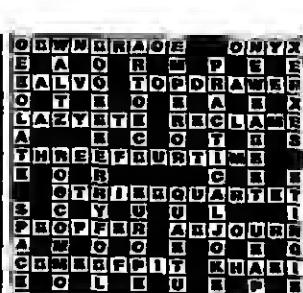
Across

- 1,13 Submit to the rest (4,2,5,4)
- 4 Ringmaster (5)
- 9 See 8
- 10 Dashed escape route? (3,4)
- 11 Lover of 4 and 10 down is past her sell-by date, I hear (5)
- 12 Underworld boiler left out of hi-tech back-up system (5)
- 13 See 1 across
- 15 Custer's last stand too? (5) — That's right (4)
- 16 Child-bearing on course for the better (4)
- 17 Embodied motorist's entertainment with neat manoeuvre (5)
- 21 Bordeaux type producing vinegar? No, not a chance! (5)
- 22 See 25
- 24 To wit, without Tubby

- Clayton's lot, wine would be unpredictable (10)
- 25 Superb acronym from "A Passage to India" (4)
- 26,22 — my God, — (Sarah Flowers Adams) revealing the errant E & OE (5,2,4)
- 27 Hold with one arm (5)

Down

- 1 Dry point among September's days (7)
- 2 A dead ringer for the Maid of old Drury, say (5)
- 3 Slips closer to being on strike here (7)
- 5 From Armagh, a stitch comes undone (5)
- 6 Logarithmic results from n in area (5)
- 7 Muscle encountered when turning, rising or falling (7)

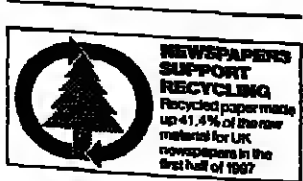


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,334

- 6,9 Gate's famous nifty view in DOS? (7,6,4)
- 14 Water botmen are evidently off to join the city volunteers (5)
- 16 Lover of 4 and 11 (7)
- 18 Definitely the binding clause (7)
- 19 Crime often follows high temperature intellect (7)
- 20 Refined primitive poison (5)
- 23 Thanks, Dad, for sun and the taste of Spain (5)

Solution tomorrow

23 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 336 228. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by AFS



I shall oppose the death penalty. I will advocate proper support for lone mothers who want to stay at home to look after their children. The more I think about it, the less this perception of me as a rightwinger makes sense to me: so where does it come from?
William Oddie, newly appointed editor of the Catholic Herald

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